United Nations A/73/PV.21

General Assembly

Seventy-third session

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21st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 17 October 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 130

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/289)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

Judge Meron (International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals): It is my profound privilege to appear before the General Assembly once again, and for the final time, as President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Before turning to the substance of my remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly congratulate you, Madam President, on Ecuador's assumption of the presidency of the Assembly and to wish you every success during your term.

I would also like to express my thanks for the vital support and cooperation provided to the Mechanism by the Office of Legal Affairs, and especially by Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, and Mr. Stephen Mathias, Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs.

Justice, accountability and the rule of law are principles that stand out among our noblest and highest ideals. Commitment to those principles forms the bedrock of our Organization. But as familiar as those ideals may be, I would nonetheless ask all of us to pause for a moment and reflect on why they matter. Justice matters because it is by pursuing accountability through independent, impartial and rigorously fair adjudication that we cement respect for the rule of law, and, by doing so, shape the bricks that pave the way for us along pathways to peace.

Justice matters because it is through judicial proceedings that we defend, and demand adherence to, the values embodied in our laws — laws that, in many ways, reflect our better selves, laws that denounce cruelty and malice and, at the international level, laws that reflect the fundamental expectation that, even in the chaos of armed conflicts, we shall be guided by and strive to protect, basic humanity.

Justice matters because, at its core, it represents a profound acknowledgment of human dignity, the importance of every life, the pain of victims and the responsibility we have for one another. In everyday life we may not reflect a great deal upon the value of justice, accountability or the rule of law, but it is when we stand aggrieved, watch loved ones taken away on trains and trucks never to return, bear witness to brutality and barbarism, or bear that ourselves, that we are most keenly aware of the value of justice. And it is when we endeavour to rebuild our lives and our communities in the wake of devastating violence and strive together to bring about lasting peace that we are most aware of the crucial foundation that justice, accountability and the rule of law provide.

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Over the course of nearly three-quarters of a century, the United Nations has borne witness, time and again, to horrific atrocities and utter inhumanity. In the face of some of the worst crimes, conflict and chaos imaginable, the United Nations is at its undeniable best when it acts swiftly and decisively to prevent suffering and takes concrete steps to ensure that our common and vital commitment to justice, accountability and the rule of law will be upheld. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) were born of just such compelling demands for justice and accountability. From the time they were established, those Tribunals were true pioneers, blazing a trail for all of the other efforts to ensure individual accountability for violations of international law that would follow in the intervening years.

In case after case, the Tribunals clarified the contours of international humanitarian and human rights law, reinforced respect for the rule of law and made it plain that no one stands above it. They demonstrated the singular importance of fairness and due process. And they brought into sharp focus the horrific atrocities committed during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and across the region of the former Yugoslavia during the terrible conflicts there. In short, the legacy of the Tribunals is a remarkable one. And it is one that the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, as their successor and the institution established to carry out and complete their residual, essential responsibilities, proudly carries forward today.

As set forth in its annual report submitted in August (see A/73/289), the Mechanism made good progress over the course of the past year. From providing protection and support for vulnerable victims and witnesses to supervising the enforcement of sentences of those convicted, and from preserving and managing the Tribunals' incomparable archives to responding to requests for assistance from national jurisdictions, the Mechanism continued to carry out the core functions entrusted to it. As detailed in the report, the Prosecutor for the Mechanism, Mr. Serge Brammertz, and his Office also continued their efforts to locate and arrest the remaining fugitives indicted by the ICTR and the Mechanism. The cooperation of Member States with those efforts remains vital to ensuring that the fugitives are brought to justice. State cooperation is also vital for so many other aspects of the Mechanism's work, such as the enforcement of the sentences of those convicted, the relocation of those who have been acquitted and released and the ability of the Mechanism to function smoothly on the territories of its host States.

And of course, the Mechanism has continued to be engaged in a wide range of judicial activities, with the Judges of the Mechanism issuing one appeal judgment and scores of other decisions and orders during the reporting period, as well as amending the Rules of Procedure and Evidence. In addition, significantly, the Judges adopted a revision to the Code of Professional Conduct for the Judges of the Mechanism, which introduced a disciplinary procedure. That is further evidence of the Mechanism's commitment to accountability and best practices in all that it does.

As set forth in the report, the Mechanism reached another important milestone when, following the closure of the ICTY, in December 2017, the Mechanism began to operate, for the first time since its establishment, as a stand-alone institution, without the support of its predecessors. While it weathered unexpected budgetary challenges during that same time frame, thanks to the leadership of the Registrar of the Mechanism, Mr. Olufemi Elias, the exceptional professionalism and dedication of the Mechanism's staff and the support of the General Assembly, the Mechanism, as an institution, emerged with a demonstration of resilience. Indeed, in many ways, we have redoubled our efforts to improve operations, working methods and procedures so as to maximize efficiency and effectiveness while also seeking to serve as a model of careful stewardship of the limited resources entrusted to us.

Although the reporting period ended on 30 June, before concluding my remarks I would like briefly to touch upon three developments that have since occurred.

First, it grieves me to report the sad passing away, earlier this month, of Judge Mparany Mamy Richard Rajohnson of Madagascar, a colleague who was appreciated and respected by his fellow Judges and staff alike, both at the Mechanism and, before that, at the ICTR. He will be greatly missed. With his passing, and in the light of two other vacancies on the judicial roster created by the departure of Judge Bakone Justice Moloto of South Africa and the non-renewal of the term of Judge Aydin Sefa Akay of Turkey, the Mechanism now has only 22 Judges on its roster. I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who are taking steps to help fill those vacancies.

Secondly, I am pleased to report that the Arusha Branch of the Mechanism began its first judicial activity in September, with the initial appearance of five individuals indicted on charges of contempt of court. That first hearing went very smoothly and demonstrates the Mechanism's readiness to respond at short notice once the remaining fugitives who are expected to be tried by the Mechanism are located and arrested.

Finally, as some may already be aware, changes were made in recent weeks to the composition of the Appeals Chamber benches that are hearing the appeals in the cases of Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić following motions for the disqualification of certain Judges, including myself. In the Mladić case, and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the responsibility to decide the motions for disqualification was assumed by the most senior Judge able to act, who granted the motions to disqualify Judge Carmel Agius, Judge Liu Daqun and myself. In the Karadžić case, following the filing of a motion for my disqualification, I withdrew from the case prior to the senior Judge issuing a ruling. While I have every confidence that my fellow Judges now on the benches of those two cases will take all possible measures to ensure that the changes in bench composition do not extend the time for those proceedings any more than necessary, I regret that I will no longer be in a position to see the Karadžić case to its conclusion by the end of the year, as had been the aim. Nonetheless, as set forth in my decision to withdraw from the bench in that case, I considered it to be in the interest of justice that I withdraw from the case in order to not allow the then-pending disqualification proceedings to impede the progress of the appeals in the case.

I end my remarks as I began them today, with a focus on justice. Underlying the establishment of the ICTY in the early 1990s was a principle brilliantly articulated by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Let justice be done, lest the world should perish. That same principle must continue to guide us today — not just at the Mechanism, but at the United Nations more generally. It has been my profound privilege to do my part to serve that noble end as a Judge for nearly two decades and as President of the Mechanism since the institution's inception. For that extraordinary opportunity to serve, and for the opportunity to bid the Assembly farewell today, I am most grateful.

The President: I would like to thank Judge Theodor Meron for his long-standing dedication, contribution and commitment to international law, justice and human rights. I thank him for his service.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Chaboureau (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank President Theodor Meron for the sixth annual report (see A/73/289) of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, submitted pursuant to article 32 (1) of its statute and covering the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

Concerning the activities of the Mechanism, we would like first of all to express our gratitude to Judge Meron for all that he has accomplished as President of the Mechanism. Judge Meron contributed significantly to enhancing and developing international criminal law and justice during his time at the Residual Mechanism and, before that, at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). We also congratulate Judge Carmel Agius on his appointment as President of the Mechanism as of 19 January 2019.

We underline the importance of respecting the judicial independence of the Mechanism and its Judges. We take note of the amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the Mechanism and the revision of the Code of Professional Conduct for the Judges, as well as of the issuance of practice directions by the President.

On the activities of the President and the Chambers, the EU and its member States commend all the entities of the Mechanism on the work carried out during the period covered by the report. We note with satisfaction the assessment made by Office of Internal Oversight Services on Chambers management.

We note that eight fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) remain at large. We welcome the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor to locate and arrest three fugitives

whose cases would be tried by the Mechanism, as well as to seek information on the whereabouts of five fugitives who were expected to be brought to trial in Rwanda after their arrest. In that regard, we appreciate the work carried out by the participants in the European and African Task Forces established by the Office of the Prosecutor in order to locate fugitives.

As mentioned in the report, national prosecutions are now essential to achieving greater justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The role of the Office of the Prosecutor to assist and support effective national prosecution of those crimes is therefore crucial, as demonstrated by the 404 requests for assistance received by the Office during the reporting period. Concerning capacity-building for the benefit of national judiciaries prosecuting war crimes, we welcome the organization of training courses under the auspices of the Office in Senegal, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

We note with concern that budgetary constraints have exposed the Mechanism to difficulties in terms of staffing, while we also welcome the adoption of its biennial budget for 2018-2019. We commend the Mechanism for having carried out its responsibilities after the closure of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as of 1 January 2018, as well as for achieving gender parity goals within its staff. We are grateful to the Republic of Tanzania for its support for the completion of the project concerning the Arusha premises. We commend the Registrar on the support provided for judicial activities and other mandated activities, notably concerning the completion of the transfer of the records of the ICTY and the updating of public interfaces to access and search judicial records of the ICTY, the ICTR and the Mechanism.

With regard to the enforcement of sentences, we would like to thank the Member States that have accepted the transfer of persons to serve their sentences on their territory. We are also grateful to the African States that have accepted on their territories persons either acquitted or released after the completion of their sentences. We encourage other Member States to conclude agreements with the Mechanism in that area in order to reduce the number of acquitted and released persons in Arusha.

The EU and its member States will continue to be strong supporters of international criminal justice, whose mission is the promotion of the rule of law, the fight against impunity and the maintenance of international peace and security. We call on all States to cooperate with the Mechanism, in full compliance with their obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Finally, we regret, and remain concerned about, the circumstances that led to the non-reappointment of former Judge Akay at the Mechanism.

Mr. Arbeiter (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ).

We would like to take this opportunity to express our continued support for the important work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. The ongoing work of the Mechanism ensures that the legacies of the ad hoc tribunals — the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) — endure. The international community should be extremely proud of the accomplishments of those two pioneering Tribunals and their important contributions to international criminal justice. Now that their mandates have ended, the Mechanism carries on their essential work by continuing the fight against impunity for the most serious international crimes.

Our countries remain strong and active supporters of international criminal justice mechanisms and believe that the Mechanism, as well as other international courts, are the cornerstones of the rules-based international order. We would like to emphasize that international support for those mechanisms cannot be extended just at the early stages, when a situation commands international attention. It is easy to overlook the work of those bodies once the horrendous crimes they were established to address fade from the headlines. However, the fact remains that, when it comes to the administration of justice, the later stages of cases can often be as important as their initial stages to ensure that justice is delivered. Therefore, we believe that it is important for the international community to continue to provide support to the Residual Mechanism and other mechanisms to encourage lasting and positive impacts on affected communities, victims and witnesses.

(*spoke in English*)

We express our appreciation for the smooth handover by the ICTY to the Mechanism and the

ICTY's clear commitment to realizing its completion strategy. For the first time since its establishment, the Mechanism is carrying out the full range of functions entrusted to it without the support of its now closed predecessor Tribunals. We commend the Mechanism on achieving that important milestone in its mandate and urge it to draw upon the best practices of and lessons learned from the Tribunals. In that regard, we hope that the Mechanism will carefully consider the recent report of Justice Jallow, following the independent expert review into the death of Slobodan Praljak.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As it was intended, the Mechanism operates with a small staff and limited resources. CANZ appreciates the efforts the Mechanism has made to deliver its mandate without compromise and acknowledges the operational challenges it has faced in that regard. In particular, CANZ would like to highlight the achievements of the Mechanism this year with respect to sentence enforcement. Eight prisoners were transferred from the United Nations detention facility in Arusha to the custody of authorities in Member States. We understand that negotiations for the transfer of the four remaining prisoners are at an advanced stage and expected to be completed by the end of 2018. CANZ commends the Mechanism for its efforts in that area. Those transfers are a significant step towards the completion of the Mechanism's mandate. However, we express our continued concern about the plight of acquitted persons who wish to be relocated from Arusha. We urge the Mechanism to continue dialogue with Member States in search of a practical solution to the difficult situation of those individuals.

CANZ notes that eight fugitives indicted by the ICTR remain at large. Three of the eight fugitives are to be tried by the Mechanism and the remaining five will be tried by Rwanda. We urge Member States to provide greater cooperation to secure their arrest and surrender. That much-needed cooperation with the Mechanism, as with all other international criminal courts and tribunals, is crucial to the path to justice. We remain hopeful that those individuals will one day soon be held to account for their alleged crimes.

CANZ appreciates the work done by the Mechanism in support of national jurisdictions and acknowledges that staff and resources are required to respond to those requests for assistance. The success of the Mechanism is dependent upon the support and cooperation of Member States. We commend such cooperation, and in particular the recent execution by Rwanda of five arrest warrants issued by the Mechanism for individuals accused of interfering with witnesses and the administration of justice.

New Zealand, Australia and Canada renew their pledge of support to the Mechanism. We will continue to offer our full commitment to it, in order to give practical effect to our steadfast and unwavering commitment to international criminal justice.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): As a country committed to multilateralism and international law, Peru welcomes the sixth annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (see A/73/289), presented to the General Assembly today by its President, Judge Theodor Meron, and covering the work of the Mechanism for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

We believe that, while the functions of the Residual Mechanism, established by Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), will continue to diminish over time, the Mechanism will continue to contribute to the development of international criminal law, as did the special tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, while ensuring accountability and preventing impunity.

We welcome the way in which the Residual Mechanism fulfils its mandates and carries out the functions assigned to it, which is especially important after the closure, last December, of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. We highlight the steps taken to implement the recommendations of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and take note of the amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, which call for a balance between the various approaches used in the Romano-German and Anglo-Saxon legal systems. In addition, we would like to commend several African and European Governments for their willingness to allow convicted persons to serve sentences in their respective countries. We also underscore the need to bring fugitives to justice. In that regard, the success of the Residual Mechanism depends to a large extent on State cooperation in enforcing sentences, adhering to rulings and meeting the requests of the Residual Mechanism for assistance.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the commitment of Peru, current Chair of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on International

Tribunals, to the promotion of justice, the rule of law and accountability, as well as to the work of the International Residual Mechanism.

Mr. Arrocha Olabuenaga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks President Judge Theodor Meron for the sixth report on the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals over the past year (see A/73/289), which reflects the Mechanism's challenges and achievements.

My delegation echoes the words of appreciation expressed by the President of the General Assembly for Judge Meron's work in the service of international justice. We also echo the Judge Meron's own words that justice matters.

My delegation takes note of the difficulties that the Residual Mechanism has faced, in particular considering that, since January and for the first time since its establishment, the Mechanism is shouldering its responsibilities without the administrative and financial support of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, following its closure. In order to meet those challenges, we believe it timely that the Mechanism is implementing a cost-cutting plan.

Mexico acknowledges that the Mechanism has managed to establish itself as a small, temporary and efficient structure with the capacity to handle various workloads and strike a balance between its immediate needs and longer-term priorities, as the Office of Internal Oversight Services concluded in March in its review of the Residual Mechanism. That efficiency is reflected in the wide range of activities undertaken by the President, the Chambers, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry. We encourage the Mechanism to continue its positive trend of reducing its personnel and expenses, in accordance with its residual and temporal mandate.

Finally, we reiterate that the work of the Mechanism, whose establishment we supported in 2010, is crucial to ensuring the effective culmination of the judicial processes initiated by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, such as appeals, the protection of witnesses and victims and the enforcement of judgments, as well as to preserving and propagating the valuable legacy of ad hoc tribunals in the development of international criminal law.

Ms. Paláu-Hernández (United States of America): With the closure of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), in December 2017, the United States thanks those who served at the ICTY for their hard work in providing justice to the victims of atrocities and for their efforts in promoting international criminal accountability. Justice and accountability at the international and national levels remain critically important, particularly in the face of ongoing conflicts where grave crimes have been committed.

The United States commends the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals for smoothly assuming the functions of the ICTY and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). During the reporting period, the Mechanism functioned without the support of either Tribunal for the first time, and did so successfully and efficiently.

The United States recognizes President Meron for his continued leadership of the Mechanism. President Meron has faithfully served the Mechanism and, through his work, has helped ensure justice for victims of atrocities and due process for defendants.

During the reporting period, the Mechanism adopted amendments and policies to increase efficiency and clarity with regard to the procedures of the Mechanism. We are hopeful that the expenditure reduction plan implemented by the Mechanism will further increase its efficiency.

We recognize the efforts of Prosecutor Brammertz, particularly in collecting new intelligence and leads on the eight fugitives indicted by the ICTR. Tracking activities have helped develop a clearer picture of the strategies used by the fugitives, and the United States remains hopeful that will aid in the efforts to locate them.

The United States also commends the Prosecutor's assistance to national jurisdictions in their own prosecution of atrocity crimes. In response to requests from Member States, the Office of the Prosecutor handed over more than 310,000 pages of documentation, which will constitute meaningful assistance for the national prosecution of atrocity crimes. The efforts to increase the capacity within national judiciaries, especially in East Africa and the former Yugoslavia, promote the justice and accountability that the international community is committed to providing. Such efforts encourage sovereign national Governments

to take action and ensure the legitimate and effective prosecution of international crimes and other atrocities.

The Mechanism should continue to be supportive of appropriate prosecution by sovereign national Governments. Attention to the Mechanism's mandate as a temporary institution is of particular importance in understanding the need to support national systems for justice. The transfer of nine persons to enforcement States to serve their sentences shows the Mechanism's commitment to its mandate.

October marks the twentieth anniversary of the first rewards, of up to $5 million, that the United States authorized for information leading to the arrest of individuals responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. In the past 20 years, we have paid dozens of rewards totalling millions of dollars to bring those responsible for crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda to justice. But our pursuit of justice is not over. Eight Rwandans remain at large, and the United States is more committed than ever to ensuring that they are brought to justice. We will continue to offer large rewards for information leading to the arrest of those men. We urge all States to remain relentless in their efforts to find, arrest and surrender those fugitives.

To the victims of those individuals — they are not forgotten. To those fugitives and those who harbour them — we will not cease our search. To Governments — we emphasize that the adjudicated facts established through the proceedings of those Tribunals represent an actual historical record of crimes committed during the conflicts, including genocide. They offer an opportunity for us to reach a shared understanding of what happened and prevent recurrence. None of us gains when individuals or Governments seek to falsely revise facts, deny history, politicize tragedy or portray convicted war criminals as heroes. We must work together to reverse that trend, in a spirit of truth and reconciliation, and ensure the crimes of perpetrators continue to be publicly rejected.

The United States would like to emphasize its gratitude to those who worked with the ICTR, the ICTY and the Mechanism, along with those who continue to work with the Mechanism. Those efforts show that justice can be achieved when the international community comes together. May those who lost their lives in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia continue to be remembered, and may the efforts to attain justice for them remain strong. It is with great pride that we state our continued support of the Mechanism and our continued commitment to accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims of atrocities.

Ms. Pejic (Serbia): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the Republic of Serbia.

Serbia fulfils all its obligations regarding cooperation with the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Only one first-instance case and two appeals cases remain before the Mechanism. Our relevant institutions continue to facilitate the Mechanism's Office of the Prosecutor's free access to all evidence, documents, archives and witnesses. That cooperation is unencumbered and all requests have been addressed. Witnesses have been allowed to testify freely, relinquishing their right to not testify on account of State, military and/or official secrets. All conditions under which the defendants were temporarily released were met without exception. The defendants' conduct was in accordance with the decisions delivered by the Mechanism's Judges.

Serbia's initiative related to the enforcement of the sentences of convicted parties in the countries of origin would help achieve the purpose of punishment and resocialization, which the enforcement of the sentences in far-off countries does not do. The convicts do not understand the language of those countries and cannot meet with their families or relatives. More often than not, they are kept in inadequate conditions and provided inadequate health care. Serbia is ready to provide guarantees that all the necessary security measures will be taken if sentences are enforced in the country of origin, and accepts international monitoring.

At the national level, Serbia continues to be committed to processing war crimes irrespective of the nationality of the perpetrators of the grievous crimes against humanity.

At the regional level, my country believes that regional cooperation is the only way to achieve reconciliation and stable relations among neighbouring States. That is why Serbia is actively engaged in deepening and enhancing that cooperation. We have signed bilateral agreements that provide a legal framework for cooperation between our countries in relation to cases of war crimes.

I want to emphasize that we regret the circumstances that resulted in former Judge Aydin Sefa Akay not being reappointed to the Mechanism. We believe that during his time at the Mechanism Judge Akay demonstrated exceptional professionalism and objectivity in performing his duties.

Finally, I would like to underline that Serbia remains fully committed to meeting its obligations in cooperation with the Mechanism.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My statement will not be as sunny as that of some of the delegations that preceded me, and I would therefore like to ask members to listen carefully.

We thank the leadership of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals for the presentation of the report (see A/73/289) on its activity. We continue to closely follow its activity and work, including its judicial proceedings. The past year saw the completion of the second two-year cycle of the Mechanism's existence, a review of its work by the Security Council, as provided for in Council resolution 1966 (2010), and the two-year extension of the Mechanism's operation as a result of that review.

At the time of the review, we had hoped that the Residual Mechanism would be able to take into account the mistakes made by its predecessor, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), in the work of administering international criminal justice, and be able to justify that model's right to exist. However, it appears that we were wildly optimistic. The Mechanism is clearly copying the ICTY's flawed practices. It is using familiar tricks, such as transforming what is really an acquittal into a conviction by limiting the related sentence to time served in pretrial detention, as in the *Vojislav Šešelj* case. Going on the March report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (S/2018/206), the Mechanism also seems to be following the ICTY's dubious practices with regard to staffing policy and judicial administration. In the past few months the Mechanism's judges have been reshuffled, including through the recusal of the President himself, who according to the Statute should preside over the Appeals Chamber. In that context, we cannot understand how judges who were migrated over to the Mechanism from the ICTY could have been appointed to the *Radovan Karadžić* and *Ratko Mladić* appeal cases in the first place, especially since the roster includes other experts who are not tainted with the deplorable so-called legacy of the ICTY. Doubts have naturally and inevitably arisen about the impartiality of the proceedings under way, and as we understand it, the Mechanism is currently in total chaos.

We have studied the publicly available recent rulings of the Mechanism on the *Mladić* and *Karadžić* cases. Behind the dry bureaucratic language, one thing is clear — the Mechanism's leadership is to a large degree focused on some internal intrigues rather than the administration of justice. We have already frequently warned of the danger of that, including in the Security Council when there was a proposal to reappoint the-then ICTY leadership to analogous posts in the Mechanism.

Against that depressing backdrop, one can imagine how the Mechanism is dealing with other issues, such as providing defendants with timely and appropriate medical care. That is very important, and in that regard we are particularly concerned about the health of Ratko Mladić, for whom we have repeatedly demanded quality medical examination and treatment. We reiterate that if that is an impossible task for the Mechanism's prison doctors, the time has come to release Mr. Mladić temporarily so that he can get treatment in Russia or Serbia.

We have studied the sections of the report on the Residual Mechanism's capacity-building assistance to national judicial organs that prosecute war crimes. As was the case last year, the work is being carried out in countries, among others, that have absolutely no connection to the situations under the Residual Mechanism's consideration. Such so-called capacity-building activity contravenes Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), according to which the Residual Mechanism is a temporary structure with a strictly limited mandate.

We therefore call on the Mechanism to halt its inappropriate expenditure of the funds and human resources allocated to it. We trust that it will not become distracted by tasks not included in its Statute but will rather focus on concluding the functions entrusted to it as quickly as possible.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the sixth annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in the exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Ms. Buner (Turkey): Turkey would first like to thank President Meron for his briefing on the report (see A/73/289) of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and for his leadership during his term of office. We would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the work of the Mechanism, as defined in Security Council resolution 1966 (2010) and subsequent resolutions, with a view to ensuring that a number of essential functions of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda are carried out.

Regarding the unfortunate remarks made by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Serbia about a Turkish national, I would like to set the record straight for the General Assembly. Mr. Aydin Sefa Akay is a Turkish national who was elected to the Mechanism's roster of judges in 2011. In 2016 judicial proceedings were initiated in Turkey and serious criminal charges brought against Mr. Akay for conduct that was outside the scope of his functions as a judge of the Mechanism. Against that backdrop, the Secretariat decided not to reappoint him to the roster in June. As President Meron emphasized in his statement, justice matters and nobody is above the law, including the judges of the Mechanism in matters unrelated to the exercise of their official mandate.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 130.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

United Nations A/73/PV.22

General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-third session

22nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 18 October 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Agenda item 133

Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by extending a special welcome to His Excellency Mr. Sven Mikser, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, and His Excellency Mr. Luis Videgaray Caso, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States.

Technological change is modifying our present and our prospects for the future at a dizzying pace. Faced with this substantive and accelerated transformation of history, academics, scientists, the private sector, civil society and Governments have focused on addressing the opportunities, as well as the challenges and threats, it represents.

Our Organization must also be an active part of this conversation, which for many is the most important conversation of our time. It is a fact that technological changes have an impact on each of the Sustainable Development Goals we seek to achieve. If we want to be efficient, it is essential to assess which technological changes will allow us to accelerate the fulfilment of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as those that could jeopardize it. The contributions of this meeting are in accordance with the purposes of that agenda. I will focus on three points that I consider to be crucial.

The first is the impact of technological change on the future of work. If we want to achieve the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all people by 2030, we must create 600 million new jobs. Rapid technological change affects jobs. According to estimates, automation may eliminate 75 million jobs by the year 2022 but would also create 133 million new job opportunities. We must therefore put appropriate strategies and policies in place that can help people to adapt and take advantage of the benefits of these new labour markets. Women and girls must, of course, be included in these plans.

My second point concerns the potential for rapid technological change in the context of climate action, in particular the advancement of low-carbon technologies. We must accelerate the development of these technologies if we want to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5° C, as established in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and in the light of Goal 13 of the 2030 Agenda. The recent report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reminds us that, if we act collectively and responsibly, we can achieve the commitments of the Paris Agreement. It also alerts us to the dangers to which humankind will be exposed if we fail to do so. Technological evolution can contribute to the generation of clean and affordable sources of energy for millions of people who currently lack access to it.

Thirdly and finally, the Organization should continue to address the issue of rapid technological changes, keeping the well-being of peoples at the centre of its deliberations. Technological advances have

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the potential to transform our lives for the better, but it is critical that these advances also be accessible to everyone. Otherwise, rapid technological change can increase inequality and move us further away from achieving Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda. A clear example of this is digital technologies; despite their rapid expansion, only 48 per cent of the world's population has access to the Internet. The digital divide that persists within and between countries is an obstacle to sustainable development.

Another challenge associated with the digital age is the protection of the individual's right to privacy. I wish to highlight that certain technologies that are still being developed — such as artificial intelligence or machine learning — require solid regulatory frameworks to address the challenges and risks that their use represents for the future of humankind.

Technological change imposes an unprecedented transformation upon us, and our Organization cannot ignore this paradigm shift. Under this premise, I am sure that we will be able to fulfil our multilateral commitments for present and future generations.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mauthe-Käter (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

People in our societies feel that the world is changing at a rapid pace. Many millions of people have embraced this change as a great opportunity to improve their lives. They have been able to harness the opportunities that new technologies can bring to all dimensions of sustainable development. Others are at risk of being left behind, in particular the half of the global population that is still not connected to the Internet. There are concerns about the impact of new technology on employment, privacy and security, for example. We also face a gender digital divide. All of us — Governments, as well as other stakeholders including the private sector, civil society and the technical community — have responsibilities to ensure that people across the globe are able to benefit from the opportunities of new technologies and that people's concerns are addressed.

The task ahead of us is to work collaboratively together to harness the positive, transformative power of new technologies for the good of all and manage the risks and challenges. We therefore welcome the fact that the Secretary-General has put this issue at the top of his agenda by establishing the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation. We also welcome the Secretary-General's strategy on new technologies, which will guide the work of United Nations agencies. At the same time, we recall key documents in that area, such as the outcome document of the open consultation process on overall review of the implementation of the world summit on the information society. Furthermore, we commend Mexico and Japan for their leadership as co-Chairs of the third Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for the Sustainable Development Goals, and we express our appreciation for the important work of the United Nations 10-Member Group to support the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, which also includes representatives from Europe.

In our joint journey towards this new future, it might be helpful to agree together on where we actually want to arrive at. The vision of the European Union and its member States encompasses a future in which new technology leads to sustainable development, economic growth, job creation for all, the protection of our climate and the environment, women's and girls' empowerment, better education, advancements in agriculture and the reduction of inequalities among and within countries. We envision a future in which new technologies contribute to good governance, strong democratic institutions and the social well-being and integrity of societies, as well as human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, instead of autocracy and discrimination. Our vision is of a future in which the integrity and dignity of every individual are respected, including every individual's right to the freedom of expression and protection from arbitrary interference in his or her privacy. So, how do we get there?

First, we need to maintain a transparent global dialogue that includes all relevant stakeholders from Governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and academia. This year's STI Forum was a good example of how much energy and valuable ideas are set free when all those actors come together, as we heard from the Deputy Permanent

Representative of Mexico in the informal meeting held earlier today. We are also looking forward to the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation on how to improve that global dialogue.

Secondly, we need more cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders. For that, we need the United Nations system to open up more to other stakeholders, supported by strong multilateral cooperation. We need the United Nations as a forum where we exchange good practices and learn from one another's experiences, not as a regulator. The Secretary-General's *Strategy on New Technologies* recognizes that we must

> "become more open to new ideas and new voices, which challenge our institutional reflexes for business as usual and allow the United Nations to credibly engage with partners".

That is essential if the United Nations is to become an obvious partner for industry and civil society stakeholders.

Thirdly, we need to find better ways to utilize science, technology and innovation, and existing mechanisms, such as the Internet Governance Forum, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Without science, technology and innovation, we will not be able to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We heard that today from the representative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which does great work, together with other United Nations entities, to foster that agenda.

The European Union and its member States have already put measures in place to translate that vision into a reality. With the EU digital single market, we are tearing down regulatory walls and moving from 28 national markets to a single one. That can contribute €415 billion per year to our economy and create hundreds of thousands of jobs. With our new General Data Protection Regulation, we have established one clear set of data protection rules for all companies operating in the EU. That means people have more control over their personal data and that businesses benefit from a level playing field.

With regard to artificial intelligence, European leaders have decided to coordinate a joint strategy that will also build on the work of the new EU Global Tech Panel and various activities in EU member States. In addition, we are also stepping up our cooperation with partners in developing countries. In 2017, we adopted a new policy involving the Digital4Development initiative and significantly increased the number of projects, including by investing in capacity-building, digital skills and digital health. In December, together with UNCTAD, we supported our African partners in organizing the first Africa eCommerce Week in Nairobi.

Let me conclude by expressing our commitment to engaging constructively in this global dialogue on new technologies and rapid technological change, and making sure that all voices are heard and no one is left behind.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Mr. Videgaray Caso (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): With your permission and understanding, Madam President, before making a statement on the impact of rapid technological change I would like to take a few minutes to discuss a topic other than that which has brought us together. I should like to talk about an urgent humanitarian issue.

It is public knowledge that a large group of our Central American brothers and sisters coming from Honduras have formed a caravan that is approaching the border between Guatemala and Mexico. I would like to inform the General Assembly that Mexico has requested institutional cooperation from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Secretary-General so that, in accordance with the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, we can receive assistance from the United Nations system to process refugee applications submitted by caravan members, as well as find permanent solutions that respect their dignity and rights. For Mexico, it is of the utmost importance to deal with the caravan in accordance with the law and — I emphasize — with respect for and the protection of the human rights of the caravan members. On behalf of all Mexicans, from this rostrum I call on the region and the entire world to become involved in Central America through international development cooperation. It is only through cooperation that leads to peace, jobs and economic development that the structural causes of this contemporary humanitarian phenomenon can be resolved. I thank everyone for their understanding.

I very warmly welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia and all representatives participating

in this meeting. It is an honour for me to head up this discussion, mandated by resolution 72/242 of December 2017, which was sponsored by Mexico and 35 other countries that recognized the importance of rapid technological change. Today, less than a year later, the multifaceted and profound effects of rapid technological change are more obvious than ever. The Secretary-General has recognized the importance of the phenomenon and has made it one of his priorities, as we heard him say in this Hall at the opening of the current session of General Assembly (see A/73/PV.1).

It is clear that the effects of technological change affect all countries in the economic, social and environmental fields, regardless of their level of development. It is a phenomenon that is of concern to us all. The new technologies that the founder of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, has labelled the "fourth industrial revolution" have the potential to change the destiny of humankind forever. They have the potential to promote development and well-being, but also bear risks, even some that are existential for humankind.

Given that challenge, Mexico has decided to move from being a passive observer to actively seeking solutions. While the world is changing at an exponential rate, we must recognize that public policies continue to develop at a linear speed. For that reason, Mexico has brought the discussion of this topic to a universal forum, the United Nations, and invited its States Members to share their experiences. We also ask the United Nations system to provide the support necessary to make the most of the benefits of technological change and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Mexico is convinced that the General Assembly is the ideal space in which to raise awareness among States and societies about the paradigm shift that technological progress represents and will represent. With that, we will create the opportunity to anticipate and mitigate potentially negative effects in a timely manner. The transformation that we are witnessing today is happening through multiple new technologies, which present challenges and opportunities.

Since the adoption of the resolution that gathers us here today, between 44 and 60 countries have met periodically to listen to experts and organize discussions to design better public policies. One such meeting, for example, took place in Silicon Valley, at the World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, at which I had the privilege of participating in May. A few weeks ago, at the opening of this session of the General Assembly, the message delivered by the President of Mexico (see A/73/PV.6), Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, was clear on this critical issue — new technologies have increased the level of demand on Governments to obtain immediate and concrete results. Aware of the urgent need to act, Secretary-General Guterres has also assumed leadership with the creation of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation and by presenting his strategy on new technologies, which deserves our full recognition and support. We will be attentive to its results in the spring of 2019.

We trust that the United Nations system will be able to support us in taking better advantage of new technologies as the main means of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At this stage of learning, we have also enjoyed the support of the main United Nations agencies, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which today governs the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The goal is to exploit technological advances to accelerate the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, without limiting or halting innovation and technological development.

We also had the opportunity to listen to experts at the previous Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, co-Chaired by Mexico and Japan, and at the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. We have undoubtedly taken a first step to achieving global awareness. Now more than ever, it is vital to understand the opportunities and challenges of technological change and the need for all countries and societies to be involved.

Mexico has taken action on this matter. At the global level, together with DESA, in 2016 and 2018 two meetings were convened of experts from around the world, whose recommendations fed the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. At the regional level, as Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, in 2017 and 2018 Mexico promoted the exchange of opinions with multiple actors on the opportunities and challenges related to the use of technologies emerging in the region. That was reflected in the report entitled *Data,*

algorithms and policies: Redefining the digital world, which was presented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

At the national level, I must point out that Mexico has established a national digital strategy coordination in the Office of the President of the Republic, which this year presented Mexico's strategy on artificial intelligence, seeking to develop an adequate framework of governance through multisectoral dialogue that would allow us to better understand the technology and develop better practices and more efficient public policies. With that, Mexico has become one of the first 10 countries to have established such a strategy.

On its own initiative, the Government of Mexico has set itself the task of identifying the impact of the new technologies that constitute the fourth industrial revolution, with particular emphasis on artificial intelligence, within the scope of the 2030 Agenda. We have identified, one by one, the positive and negative impacts of these new technologies on the Sustainable Development Goals. As an example, I should like to share some of the possible impacts that we have identified. Regarding Sustainable Development Goals 8.2, 8.3 and 9.5, we have identified that artificial intelligence could give a significant boost to commercial productivity by developing more efficient processes. That could reduce costs and allow more capital to be reinvested in innovation, thereby accelerating the fulfilment of those Goals.

However, it is also a matter of fact that artificial intelligence is one of the greatest challenges, as you mentioned a moment ago, Madam, when we consider the labour market, particularly the labour displacement that may result from artificial intelligence technology replacing the work carried out by human beings. It may generate abrupt and immediate job losses for millions of people. That would undoubtedly have a particularly serious impact on the creation of decent jobs, which is set out in Sustainable Development Goal 8.3. We have therefore identified specific positive and negative impacts of each of the different emerging technologies — such as blockchain, nanotechnology and biotechnology — on compliance with the SDGs.

The informal meeting that was opportunely convened this afternoon highlighted important elements and evidence of the need to act without delay on this crucial issue. For our part, in order to better understand the complexity of the issue, we have continued working with the major universities, as well as with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF and UNESCO, among other principal agencies of the United Nations system, in response to the mandate set by resolution 72/242. With that support, the Permanent Mission of Mexico is currently negotiating a new draft resolution, with the backing of various countries, that will allow us all to be better prepared. I hope that all Member States represented here in the Assembly will join the discussion and debate on a phenomenon that affects and concerns us all. I encourage them to work together to support this initiative. With their help and support, we will ensure that the fourth industrial revolution will benefit all humankind.

In your speech a few moments ago, Madam, you stated that the debate on new technologies is perhaps the most important debate of our time. I agree. The emergence of new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, represents an evolutionary and existential challenge for humankind. The debate is broad and attracts the interest of people from all continents and of all beliefs. In this debate, there are optimists who view a major opportunity in artificial intelligence and the fourth industrial revolution for the whole world to enjoy a better life, with improved levels of health and greater capacities, including both physical and cognitive. On the other hand, there is the pessimistic view of new technology as a threat — one that may even be existential for humankind. We are convinced that, in the light of these new technologies, the future of humankind is neither determined nor fatal. It will depend on the actions and decisions we take. We must take those decisions together. We must take them as a united humankind. Therefore, the most important forum in which to lead and guide the debate is the United Nations and the General Assembly. Madam President, I commend your initiative and the convening of this debate. I hope that it will be the most important debate of our times, as you said.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

Mr. Mikser (Estonia): Estonia aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union.

In my national capacity, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening today's timely debate

on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and enabling me to focus on digital technology.

During the past three decades, my country, Estonia, has followed a very particular path of development. In 1991, when Estonia regained its independence after several decades of foreign occupation, it was naturally a recipient of development aid. By 1998, however, Estonia had already become a donor of such aid. That accelerated development path was due in no small part to our adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and e-governance solutions. Digitization has brought Estonia stronger economic growth, greater resource efficiency, and speedier human development.

Estonia strongly believes in the principles of efficiency, equality and empathy. We want to improve efficiency in the world so that we can make better use of our resources. Estonia is a strong advocate for equality. We believe in levelling the playing field for everyone on the path to development and digitization. And Estonia truly values empathy, so we want to help others with their development. Digitization improves Government effectiveness and overall efficiencies. It improves transparency and trust in public processes and enhances citizens' engagement in building more inclusive and cohesive societies. It is therefore crucial to achieving the promises of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Regarding efficiency, we strongly believe that ICTs can revolutionize entrepreneurship, education, employment and even health care. Digital online services provide economic growth. They bring down unnecessary barriers between citizens and the State and between businesses and sectors of the economy. They expand our boundaries and transcend borders. Estonia has shared its knowledge and experience with many nations of the world and will continue to do so, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Union and all who are interested and willing.

Just recently, during the high-level week here at the United Nations, Estonia launched a cooperation project with UNDP in support of the development of e-governance, in a major initiative to support the digital transformation of UNDP and developing countries. It aims to share Estonia's e-governance expertise with nearly 170 countries and territories. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia has provided the seed funding of €102,000 to launch the project, which will enable other Member States to benefit from Estonia's experience and hopefully find a way to replicate that model in their own countries. While everyone's digital transformation will obviously be unique and tailored to each individual country's particular conditions, the cooperation project unquestionably has immense potential to have an accelerating effect on development globally. While we are proud to be initiating this cooperation project with UNDP, the seed funding and expertise provided by Estonia must be leveraged and scaled up for the project to fully realize its potential to help countries make their digital transformations. I would like to invite all interested parties to join us in this great undertaking to support the digitization of the world.

No amount of technical expertise or technology will help countries to truly digitize without the political leadership and political will needed to drive that process. The role of leaders therefore cannot be overemphasized. I would just like to highlight a few examples from Estonia to illustrate what digitization looks like when political leadership gets it right. For example, our e-ID enables us to sign documents electronically, and that digital identity is the centrepiece of our e-Government. It brings great economic benefits. We estimate that Estonia saves as much as 2 per cent of its gross domestic product in time and money annually by using e-governance solutions. Another example is that last year, in 2017, 96 per cent of our citizens filed their taxes electronically. Tax forms are automatically pre-filled out, making the verification and submission of declarations a matter of minutes. And last but not least, Estonia is the first and so far the only country to introduce online elections. As a result, many more people are able and willing to cast their votes, which I believe is very good for democracy.

Despite all the great benefits of digitization, it is clear that it is not the cure for all of our ills. What is more, it will present its own set of challenges. However, those obstacles can be overcome if we keep working at them. All things considered, Estonia's experience shows that the benefits far outweigh the risks. New technologies should always be seen as enablers. They create equal opportunities if supported by proper policies. That does not mean that the risks related to them should not be ignored. Rather, the opposite is true, and they should be taken extremely seriously. I would say that cyberspace risks do not replace conventional risks but if anything make the overall picture more

complex. But a well-established international legal space should be able to deliver for humankind. The fact is that the world simply cannot afford not to go digital if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We will all have to work together to make that happen, and Estonia is determined to do its part.

Mr. Mackay (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The General Assembly's adoption of resolution 72/242 at its previous session encouraged Member States to analyse the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also urged a number of United Nations entities, such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, to give due consideration to the impact of technological change on the achievement of the SDGs.

Technology is a key means for implementing the SDGs and an important transformation lever in achieving them and delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the context of our discussion of the impact of technological progress on sustainable development, we want to highlight the issue of technological foresight. Technological foresight is a powerful tool for the strategic planning of national priorities in the area of science, technology and innovation as a foundation for sustainable development. An effective foresight system in this area should define the optimal directions for research and the development of technologies and production, set priorities for economic development and facilitate the effective allocation of budgets through appropriate programmes and instruments.

Belarus is currently establishing a national system of technological foresight as part of its ongoing process of planning for sustainable development. We are also carrying out a comprehensive foresight exercise on scientific and technological progress for the period from 2021 to 2025, and again for the period through 2040, with the aim of defining priority directions for our scientific and technological development and promising innovative technologies, and of developing recommendations on various scientific and technological development scenarios. A number of States are doing similar work in the area of technological foresight. However, the subject of technological foresight still does not get the attention and development it deserves at the international level, and is seen only as a specialized arena for experts or for business interests. So far there is no holistic vision of cooperation between Governments in this area for the purposes of sustainable development.

In that regard, Belarus supports establishing international cooperation on technological foresight for the needs of sustainable development. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke about this in the general debate on 1 October (see A/73/PV.16). We propose that interested Member States, international organizations and other partners unite their efforts in the area of technological foresight with the aim of assisting sustainable development. Such cooperation could take place in numerous concrete areas, such as the exchange of experience in technological foresight methodologies, the collective use of the results of analysis of technological trends, the improvement of expert capacity, international technical cooperation on the exchange of best practices and capacity-building, joint research and so on. In our view, cooperation in technological foresight would help countries jointly develop scientifically based conceptions of the possible options for their technological and innovative development in the context of global progress. It would enable them to approach the establishment of national priorities for scientific, technological and innovative activity more effectively.

Lastly, it could help improve the effectiveness of strategic planning for national economies and their interaction in a global context. We firmly believe that such cooperation would be in every country's interests and would be fully in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For its part, Belarus is prepared to initiate and participate actively in the process of establishing international cooperation in the area of technological foresight for the needs of sustainable development, and we call on all interested States and international organizations to join the process.

Mrs. Zappia (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The issue we are considering today is of paramount importance. We are no longer merely standing on the brink but at the centre of a technological revolution that is fundamentally altering the way we live, work, and relate to one another. In its scale, scope, complexity and above all its speed, this transformation could be unlike anything that humankind has ever experienced. We do not yet know fully how the so-called fourth industrial

revolution — or next production revolution — will unfold, but it is already clear that it will have global and multisectoral impact and will present extraordinary opportunities. It is also confronting us with big challenges. We should therefore respond to it with an integrated and comprehensive set of policies and actions involving all relevant stakeholders.

Rapid technological change has been increasingly discussed over the past few years in all major multilateral forums. Last year, Italy gave it major prominence within the framework of its presidency of the Group of Seven, organizing a ministerial innovation week that combined a series of ministerial meetings on the effects of the new technology revolution on industry, labour and research in the service of sustainable development. The global character of this subject makes it particularly appropriate to be discussing it in the universal framework of the United Nations, and I would therefore like to express our deep appreciation to Mexico, which spearheaded the discussion of the impact of rapid technological change by promoting the adoption of resolution 72/242. We also welcome and support the related new draft resolution to be adopted during this ongoing session of the General Assembly. We appreciate the outcome of the third Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to recognize Japan and Mexico's successful efforts as co-Chairs of that event, and we are also grateful to the key speakers in today's informal meeting for their insightful presentations.

Italy shares the vision outlined in the Secretary-General's *Strategy on New Technologies* and supports its main principles and commitments. We believe that new and rapidly developing technologies have incredible potential for advancing human welfare and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as long as they are aligned with the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the norms and standards of international laws. Technology and innovation can bring huge advances in the area of risk assessment and disaster prevention, as well as in the monitoring and mitigation of climate change, the promotion of sustainable agriculture, access to medical diagnostics and treatments, the improvement of basic and vocational education, and better management of urbanization processes through the building of smart cities.

Italy is leading in technological innovation in all of those fields. For example, we are playing a leading role in the Galileo satellite system, a project that offers a unique tool for disaster risk reduction and gives concrete support to various projects in small island developing States and least-developed countries designed to use satellite data for early-warning systems and responses to environmental disasters.

In conclusion, Italy reiterates its support for continuing the dialogue on technological innovation in the framework of the United Nations in order to ensure that our actions in this field are guided by the fundamental principles of human rights, peace, international cooperation and inclusiveness. We look forward to the next steps for this dialogue in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and we intend to participate in it actively.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*) We thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate on agenda item 133, "Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals".

Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demands not only a cross-sector approach but also major efforts in which science, technology and innovation play a central and decisive role. For Cuba, the development of science, technology and innovation is a priority that produces real results for society. When its benefits are put at the disposal of sustainable development they make countless contributions not only to economic and social growth, but also to the promotion of knowledge and skills.

In the past few decades, the rapid development and adoption of new technologies has been guided by the cumulative and exponential nature of their growth, their convergence, their falling costs and the Internet. The technologies with the greatest potential to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals include big data, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, blockchain, 3D printing, biotechnology and renewable energy.

Digitization and connectivity are two key features that have provided a wide range of new opportunities to take advantage of digital technologies in order to address virtually the implementation of Agenda 2030 in all countries. Many of these technologies are supported on global digital platforms and will radically transform not only people's lives, but also the lives of the business,

Government and social sectors over the coming decades. Therefore, we must work to develop the necessary policies in order to ensure they are used safely and to the benefit of people.

At the global level, the resources exist to eliminate the existing gap between the countries of the North and the South and to promote broad, fair and equal access to and development of these technologies for all. This requires not only political will, but also commitment on the part of developed countries in terms of financing, investment, training, the creation of infrastructure, the dissemination of knowledge and the transfer of intellectual property and technology.

The achievements of science, technology and innovation must be used to contribute to human well-being. Cuba expresses its great concern about the covert and illegal use of these technologies to promote war, interventionism, destabilization, subversion, unilateralism or terrorist actions. The only way to prevent and confront these threats is cooperation among all States.

Cuba works on the basis of a national social and economic development plan that includes priorities to be applied until 2030 to develop a society oriented towards sustainable development in which science, technology and innovation play a fundamental role. These efforts have been carried out for more than half a century under the siege of the unjust and illegal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba. That failed policy hinders the full development of science, technology and innovation in my country because it impedes, inter alia, the purchase of raw materials, equipment and reagents for research and development in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors; free access from Cuba to much of the contents of the Internet; payments for the use of broadband service for the country's international connectivity; access to high-performance brands and/or equipment in the information and communications sector; the purchase of spare parts for the maintenance and operation of the wind farm to generate renewable energy, to mention but a few specific sectors.

Cuba reiterates its commitment to combating inequality, underdevelopment, discrimination and manipulation and to establishing a more just and equitable international order in which science, technology and innovation contribute to the betterment of human beings in such a way that their well-being and dignity are guaranteed.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): As a member of the core group of exponential technological change, Turkey appreciates Mexico's efforts to bring the issue of the impact of rapid technological change to the forefront of the United Nations. This topic is of increasing interest to my country, which has the youngest and second largest population in Europe.

As we undergo the fourth industrial revolution, we should not deem the impact of technology on the economy and society as a given. We need to shape it with policies at the local, national and global levels. Member States and the United Nations could and should influence these processes. The United Nations should serve as a platform to build awareness and establish good models for country regulatory frameworks on this emerging issue. At the national level, policymakers should embrace and direct new technologies, adopt flexible policies and promote capacities to innovate.

We need proactive policies to help the labour market adapt to new demands and emerging technologies. We should also focus on training for new skills. This is not a matter for a single country or a group of countries to address. It concerns citizens of the world as a whole. We need more research to help Governments and people prepare for the changes brought by artificial intelligence and robotics. We also have to improve our understanding of the potential impact of new technologies on low-income countries. The United Nations should support countries in developing the capacity to deal with rapid technological change through partnerships, as well as the exchange of experiences and know-how.

Scientific and technological innovation constitutes a cross-cutting issue in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year's Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation highlighted the potential of technology to bridge sectoral and institutional silos, which is essential for achieving the SDGs. New technologies, including artificial intelligence, biotechnology and robotics, could generate new solutions to SDG implementation. However, they also risk widening the existing gaps between developed and developing countries unless the access of the latter to technology is promoted and supported. In this vein, Turkey strongly supports strengthening the science, technology and innovation capacity of the

least developed countries (LDCs) to facilitate their technological leapfrogging.

We are confident that the Technology Bank, hosted by Turkey in Gebze, will play a key role in promoting the integration of LDCs into the global knowledge-based economy. The Bank will strengthen the capacity of LDCs to scale up the deployment of technologies and manage intellectual property right issues. It will promote the development and implementation of national and regional science, innovation and technology strategies, strengthen partnerships among science, technology and innovation-related public entities, the private sector and other stakeholders.

The Bank has initiated baseline science, technology and innovation reviews and technology needs assessments in five countries — Guinea, Haiti, the Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uganda — in collaboration with all relevant United Nations agencies. The Bank will also focus on improving access for scientists and researchers to data, publications and science, technology and innovation initiatives in the following countries: Bangladesh, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Tanzania, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Madagascar and Malawi. We firmly believe that the Bank will play a key role in fostering productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development of LDCs.

We take pride in the fact that the establishment of the Bank marked the first Sustainable Development Goal target to be achieved: SDG 17.8. Its achievement has been highly symbolic, as it responds directly to the principle of leaving no one behind of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We call on all partners to support the Bank's activities through both contributions and partnerships.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): Today's topic reminds me of the meeting that I had with President Jim Kim of the World Bank last year in my capacity as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. President Kim said then that, each time he visits Silicon Valley, he is taken aback at how rapidly technology is developing. He was excited about the great promise frontier technologies hold for humankind. But to make the point that technology can potentially eradicate low-wage manufacturing jobs in many parts of the world, he cited the example of 3D printers now being able to print a seamless suit at the cost of only a couple of hundred dollars. He could not stress strongly enough the sense of urgency for the international community, especially the United Nations, to be fully aware of and prepare for these extraordinary developments. I could not agree with him more, especially on the point that the United Nations needs to take action. And for that reason, I wish to thank you, Madam President, for taking the initiative to convene today's meeting on this very important topic.

Throughout history, technology has been a key enabler for humankind to take great leaps forward. The agricultural revolution in the Neolithic Age liberated humankind from food insecurity, while the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century laid the groundwork for the digital innovation of today. But unlike in the past, today's frontier technologies — encompassing, among others, artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology and nanotechnology — do not stop at supporting our efforts to achieve economic development. They are now rapidly driving the transformation of our social and economic landscapes to the point of potentially outpacing our ability to foresee and adapt to the changes looming on the horizon.

In fact, these new technologies can provide powerful ways to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a world free of poverty, epidemics and violence. Recent reports of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development detail how frontier technologies can help achieve each of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by increasing productivity at lower cost and developing new solutions for critical global challenges.

At the same time, rapid technological advances are giving rise to increased uneasiness and anxiety related to privacy, equality, equity, ethics, job security and cybersecurity, to name but a few. Meaningful dialogue and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders are essential if we are to harness the promise of those technologies to achieve sustainable peace and development, and still address potential adverse consequences in a timely manner. The United Nations, with its unique convening power and a brand like no other, is best poised to mobilize all the relevant actors, especially the private sector, which is at the forefront of developing and deploying emerging technologies to make collective choices regarding new technologies.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's *Strategy on New Technologies*,

which sets out how the United Nations can effectively support the use of new technologies to better address global challenges, in line with universal values and obligations, by reforming, innovating and building the capacity of the Secretariat, among others. We also welcome the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation that was launched to implement the Strategy, and the Secretary-General's Technology Innovation Labs, to which the Republic of Korea has decided to provide financial support.

The Republic of Korea has been able to achieve rapid industrialization by making use of technology and human capital. Based on our own experiences, we firmly believe that developing countries have much to gain by taking advantage of the new opportunities offered by emerging technologies. Technological development can help accelerate the implementation of the SDGs by reducing transaction costs and creating new businesses in areas such as energy, education, environment, food security, and health. In fact, that applies to developed countries as well.

All countries, developed and developing alike, therefore need to focus on educating our young generation to effectively use those frontier technologies. We also need to reduce the technological gap among countries in terms of research and development expenditures, infrastructure, business ecosystems, domestic governance and capacity. The United Nations can provide the platform to share best practices in that regard and support Governments' efforts to build the necessary capacity.

Mr. Korneliou (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is against that backdrop that my delegation welcomes the timely draft resolution to be submitted by Mexico on the impact of rapid technological change. We should also consider further developing that text in line with technological advances in the coming years. My delegation will participate constructively in related discussions.

Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari predicted in his recent book, entitled *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, that humankind equipped with data and artificial intelligence will no longer be vulnerable to famine, epidemics and war in the future. I sincerely hope that the United Nations can guide the global discourse to come up with transformative solutions on the use of frontier technologies to better prepare for the world predicted by this thought-provoking book.

Mr. Skoknic Tapia (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile welcomes the organization of this meeting, which allows us to address the very topical and important issue of rapid technological change. We therefore appreciate and value Mexico's efforts to promote this agenda item, as we do the various presentations on the relevant work done within the framework of the United Nations, which demonstrates the global, immediate, profound and irreversible effects of new technologies. Those effects are manifested in our daily lives in various forms and through various technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data, automation, neuroscience and nanotechnology, to name but a few.

That is also the case with digital technologies, which have revolutionized economic growth and competitiveness, to the extent that today's global economy is a digital economy. These technologies interact in a digital ecosystem, generating what is being called the fourth industrial revolution.

These new technologies open up multiple opportunities to solve the problems that afflict humankind and represent enormous potential to accelerate human progress in such key areas as health, food, energy and education. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rightly considers them to be catalysts for the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as a means to measure their progress. In that context, we must take advantage of the opportunities provided by the fourth industrial revolution and the 2030 Agenda to design more effective and comprehensive public policies that will allow us to improve the quality of life of our population in the long term.

Additionally, the speed with which the forces of technological change are shaping the world of the future poses major challenges both for our countries and for the planet as a whole. These new technologies, essentially produced in an exogenous manner, have a cross-cutting impact on society, affecting our systems of production, management and governance, and threatening to increase inequalities and exert pressure on behaviours and value systems.

The challenge we face in that regard is to build endogenous capacity into new technologies to reduce those vulnerabilities. In that connection, Chile has made significant efforts to build capacities in very diverse areas. One such initiative is the development of

our own technology to change the energy matrix in the electricity sector through the use of renewable energies, which has allowed us to lead the energy transition in the region.

Another fundamental area for our country is big data and its link to artificial intelligence, since we have the privilege of serving as a platform for more than 50 per cent of the installed capacity of the world's astronomical observatories — a figure that we expect to reach 75 per cent by the beginning of the next decade. The amount of data generated by this scientific activity and the models and computational capacity necessary to analyse them offer a unique opportunity for our country to become a global platform for big data and a privileged space to stimulate experimental developments in artificial intelligence.

Those encouraging developments should, in turn, encourage us to study the social consequences and ethical limits of scientific research and engineering. That is especially the case for the use of artificial intelligence and robotics applications, an area in which we see potential interest in regional cooperation with a view to joining discussions already under way in other regions.

Those examples demonstrate both the relevance and the necessity of this afternoon's meeting. We believe that it is imperative for Governments, the private sector, international organizations, civil society, academia, technical communities and all other interested actors to know and exchange information about the opportunities and challenges of rapid technological change in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

That is why Chile actively supports international cooperation in this area and in the discussion of progress achieved, just as it supports the creation of action plans and road maps, both within the United Nations mechanisms and in the various multilateral and regional mechanisms. Ultimately, it is that type of discussion and good practices exchange that will enable us to make full and responsible use of the potential of new technologies for sustainable development.

Mrs. Imnadze (Georgia): We welcome the convening of this important meeting, which is a good opportunity to discuss the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to reflect on related challenges.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would now like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Over the past few years there has been an awakening, both globally and within the United Nations, around emerging technologies. Much-needed discussions on how to leverage technological advancements for the improvement of human welfare have begun to coalesce. As the Secretary-General noted in his address to the General Assembly:

> "Rapidly developing fields such as artificial intelligence, blockchain technology and biotechnology have the potential to turbocharge progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals." (*A/73/PV.6, p. 3*)

Those technologies hold great promise and potential. They can contribute to curing diseases, feeding growing populations, driving economic growth and connecting businesses, communities, families and friends across the globe. Never before has the international community been more ready to capitalize on technological change to address global challenges such as poverty, food security, corruption and climate change, and never before has action in that respect been so necessary. Technology can be the agent of change.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can benefit significantly from new technologies that can analyse large quantities of health-care data, leading to scientific breakthroughs. Artificial intelligence can revolutionize classrooms and provide virtual mentors that can analyse student learning patterns and prescribe individual learning plans to improve results. It can also drive balanced hiring practices and spotlight gender inequality, as well as map poverty from outer space, enabling real-time resource allocation.

The High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, established by the Secretary-General in July, and his recent *Strategy on New Technologies* illustrate the important progress being made in recognizing the potential of those technologies and in facilitating discussions and enhancing cooperation among stakeholders.

While discussing and highlighting the benefits that new technologies can bring to the 2030 Agenda, we should also fully recognize the potential risks it may entail. Artificial intelligence and robotics-driven automation may result in the widespread displacement

of workers in what is being called the fourth industrial revolution. The difference between this and the previous industrial revolutions, however, is its scale and the speed at which it is taking place. Although automation will be global, the impact will not be felt evenly. Developing countries and economies in transition are likely to bear the brunt of disruption as their traditional labour-cost advantages are undercut.

We should also remember that technology is only a tool, and in the hands of criminals or terrorists it could be maliciously used to enable new digital, physical or even political threats. Yet, the promise of technology is too great to try to stop technological innovation. We cannot do it and should not try. Instead, we should strive to uphold the promise of technology while keeping its potential perils at bay.

Georgia has been actively engaged in issues related to rapid technological advancements and their potential for disruption. In 2015 and 2016, in cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Institute and with the participation of world-renowned experts in the field of artificial intelligence, we organized events at the United Nations that addressed the issues related to the risks and benefits of artificial intelligence. Last year, together with like-minded countries, we joined Mexico in setting up the core group on exponential technological change. Georgia will continue to be committed to the group's cause and further contribute to our joint efforts to enhance technology for the benefit of all in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mrs. Pejanović Đurišić (Montenegro): I thank the President for maintaining this important issue on the General Assembly's agenda. I also thank the Mission of Mexico for coordinating and leading the preparation of the draft resolution we are discussing today.

While Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, I shall still make some additional remarks, as we are all aware that the world faces tremendous changes related to advancements in the implementation of new technologies.

Today, we are actually at the beginning of a fourth industrial revolution. Developments in information and communication technologies, artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology, biotechnology, 5G tomorrow, to name just a few, are all building on and amplifying one another. While the impending changes hold great promise and endless possibilities for sustainable development and the efficient implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is a set of broader socioeconomic, geopolitical and demographic drivers of change that parallels the technological revolution. They all interact in multiple directions and intensify one another, with the potential to lead to greater inequality and decreased international stability and security.

That is why, in this dynamic and interconnected environment, where the limits are set only by our imagination, Member States have to pool their resources in order to leverage rapid technological changes and better understand all the benefits and risks of new technological innovations.

The draft resolution we are discussing today offers a good basis for further actions, relying on a number of other relevant resolutions, declarations and reports. It is very encouraging to recognize that the previous resolutions on this matter had a positive impact on actions taken by the United Nations, and particularly the Economic and Social Council, through the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. A clear orientation towards a multi-stakeholder approach and the inclusion of diverse United Nations entities and partnerships of different actors are sound and in line with the principles that the Secretary-General has identified as guidelines for the Organization's engagement with new technologies.

Montenegro supports and invites member countries to share national achievements, strategies, policies, best practices and other engagements. In that sense, I take this opportunity to share an excellent experience we have had in working with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other countries on Montenegro's digital innovation profile. This is an analysis of a national innovation ecosystem, which provides a comparable measurement of national technological innovation capabilities in an international context. The result will be a comprehensive understanding for developing digital ecosystems, including for designing policies, implementation programmes and projects. In that manner, with ITU's help in identifying good practices, we are building elements that are critical to the digital transformation of our country, centred on achieving a number of related Sustainable Development Goals and targets. We also support the request that the reports and findings of the relevant United Nations mechanisms and commissions be updated in a timely manner with an evidence-based approach so as to provide adequate

elements for intergovernmental conclusions and recommendations. Regular yearly discussions in the General Assembly on the progress and status of United Nations actions aimed at embracing technological change in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda must be continued as a way to monitor the effects of the measures taken and to ensure timely responses to rapid changes and developments in this area.

While ensuring that all our actions align with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is crucial that we not get lost in details and that we clearly and resolutely embrace optimism over the increasing fear that we are so often witnessing these days.

Mr. Lal (India): The human story is in many ways the story of technology. The genius of technology has always shaped human lives, societies and civilizations. We have come a long way from shaping stone tools and mastering fire to the excitement of robotics and artificial intelligence. Along the way, we have seen critical advances, such as the extraction and use of metals and of various forms of energy. Technology has improved lifespans, provided food for expanding populations, driven globalization and landed people on the moon. Human-made factors have also sometimes brought us closer to the prospect of annihilation.

The twentieth century saw science improve our understanding of building blocks such as the atom, the gene and the byte. It gave way to technologies that can manipulate those building blocks to generate immense power in energy, medicine and information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ever-increasing pace of innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, synthetic biology, digital networking, big-data analytics, 3D printing, nanotechnology, the Internet of Things, financial technology, new materials and unmanned vehicles, as part of the fourth industrial revolution, affects a whole range of activities such as manufacturing and services, health care, education, development, renewable energy, geospatial information management, space technology and even warfare. Their convergence is facilitated by the emergence of digital platforms and the reduction in entry costs for innovators. They are once again completely altering businesses and the ways in which people interact with one another and with Governments.

Although technology is neutral, its deployment and access to its benefits are not. While emerging technologies, from cyber and genetic engineering to artificial intelligence, can transform lives for the better, the disparities in access to them exacerbate the existing inequalities and create new fault lines. There are also other concerns associated with these technologies that have to be addressed, such as cybersecurity, possible cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, the privacy of personal data, ethical issues regarding genetic manipulation and the obsolescence of some jobs and industries. Each industrial and technological revolution has had losers as well as winners among communities and even nations, but we cannot afford that now. The ever-increasing pace of technological change and its convergence, and the uncharted potential effects on human lives, economies and polities, require a serious discussion among all of us and the various stakeholders on the possible need and scope for international cooperation and governance in certain areas. We therefore welcome today's discussion on the impact of this rapid change on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also look forward to receiving the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation set up by the Secretary-General.

India has consistently recognized the value of deploying science and technology to improve people's lives. From the green revolution in food security to remote sensing in agriculture and fisheries to disaster risk reduction and nuclear energy for health care, we continue to invest in science and technology for sustainable development. The use of ICTs to leapfrog and scale up financial inclusion represents a major transformational intervention. It is being achieved by interlinking biometric-based unique identity systems, opening bank accounts and using smartphones, especially for the poor and marginalized, in order to enhance the outreach and delivery of Government services while improving transparency and reducing corruption. ICT tools are also being effectively deployed to improve the quality of education and health-care services as well as access to them, including through tele-education and telemedicine. Geographic information-management systems are being deployed to provide information about water, crop inventories, the availability of other natural resources and real-time early warnings for natural disasters. We have been increasingly emphasizing imparting vocational skills that can help people to find appropriate employment opportunities. One of our flagship programmes is Digital India, which seeks to use such technologies in a range of sectors and to bridge the digital divide.

Technology is a cross-cutting enabler for sustainable development, economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. In an interdependent world, the risks of uneven economic growth, development and climate change are also globalized. It is in our collective interest to collaborate to provide more equitable access to technology. Commercial interests must be balanced against the greater good.

In conclusion, the transformative impact of emerging technologies for the greater good is clear, even while their other implications are not fully understood. Those require greater discussion, understanding and a sense of collaboration for our collective interest.

Mr. Chumakov (Russia) (*spoke in Russian*): The world is on the threshold of a significant paradigm shift and there is a growing demand for new economic and social models that can take on the challenges of globalization and increasing interdependence. The pace of technological progress, stimulated by the digital economy, is continually increasing. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, 3D printing and others are changing society at an ever-increasing speed. In particular, the use of artificial-intelligence capacities to transition to exponential development could lead to profound economic, social and environmental results and changes involving industries, consumers, Governments, research institutes, industry organizations and society as a whole. Biotechnologies are transforming agriculture, while nanotechnology research is paving the way for new methods of medical diagnostics and treatment. However, it is also clear, as many speakers have said here today, that new technologies can also bring certain risks, especially for developing countries, and can contribute to an increasing technological divide in which those countries are left behind.

Although studying the impact of technological development is a relatively new process for the United Nations, we believe that the Organization already possesses the necessary tools for it. As we see it, the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council is the most appropriate global platform for exchanging views on the impact of new technologies on sustainable development, as well as for sharing best practices and experience so as to maximize the benefits of change, reduce the risk of negative effects and discuss the implementation of national, regional and international programmes in the area. We would be interested in obtaining more detailed information on the work of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation established by the Secretary-General.

We would also like to underscore that studying the impact of technological progress should not be limited to information and communication technologies and the solutions they bring, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies. A more balanced and holistic approach to identifying the challenges and opportunities that scientific progress presents is essential. In particular, there has been discussion at the international community's highest levels for some years now of issues related to the establishment of a new industrial order on a basis of nature-inspired and convergent technologies. We firmly believe that we are about to make a major leap forward in the areas of material sciences and genome research from which we will emerge at a new level in the development and implementation of such technologies. Essentially, that means broad interdisciplinary research at the nexus of the mathematical, physical, biological, information, cognitive and other sciences.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The Swiss delegation would like to thank Mexico for its commitment to this agenda item and for its leading role in encouraging discussion on a major topic of our times.

The way we use new technologies for the benefit of all, but also how we think and act with a view to achieving greater and more systematic digital cooperation, will be decisive in building our future. Digitization has brought many positive developments to the lives of millions over the past two decades. However, technology in itself is neither good nor bad. It is what we make of it that determines its qualities. We are at a decisive turning point, where citizens, businesses and politicians are increasingly concerned about some of the most complicated aspects of digitization.

With regard to Government intervention and the regulation of digitization, Switzerland believes it important to follow an approach that is conducive to innovation. Digitization is not limited to connecting people and objects. It also links various policy areas that have traditionally been treated independently of one another. In the digital world, we must take those interdependencies into account by jointly addressing issues such as Internet access for all, market regulation and the potential of digitization to help us achieve

the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, my delegation would like to thank the President for convening an informal meeting of the Assembly to discuss the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2017 United Nations Internet Governance Forum brought together key players from the international community in Geneva. In a high-level session on the future of global digital governance, we heard many voices from various interest groups, including the private sector, calling for a higher level of cooperation that would lay the foundations for a more stable and trustworthy digital space. That is why Switzerland warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's launch of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. We are sure that the Panel, which is made up of eminent members from diverse backgrounds, will generate concrete ideas on how the many actors in digital governance can cooperate more constructively and effectively so that we can all take better advantage of the opportunities afforded by digitization. In that regard, we also firmly believe that multi-stakeholder cooperation is paramount and that the Internet Governance Forum has a key role to play in present and future digital cooperation. Switzerland looks forward to this year's Forum, which will take place in Paris in November.

Lastly, as the Assembly may know, the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation very recently made a public appeal for comments on the key aspects of digital cooperation, particularly the values, principles and mechanisms that are at stake. Switzerland would like to encourage active participation in that endeavour and in the work of the High-level Panel in general.

Mr. Alshamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting, and the speakers and authors of the report (E/2018/50/Rev.1) for their guidance and contributions. On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I want to thank the Secretary-General for all his efforts on new development issues, including technology and digital cooperation. We also welcome the strategy he has launched on the Organization's approach to modern technologies.

The United Arab Emirates strongly supports multilateral activity on the interface between technology and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly with regard to emerging and new technologies. If we are to achieve the important goal set by the President of making the United Nations relevant to all people, the Organization must be at the forefront of the issues that will determine development outcomes.

The United Arab Emirates believes that rapid technological change is one of those issues that have an impact on development. Artificial intelligence has become a source simultaneously both of global optimism and concern. For that reason, last year my Government appointed the world's first Minister of Artificial Intelligence, as well as a Minister of Advanced Sciences. We take pride in the appointment of Mr. Mohammad Abdulla Al-Gergawi, our Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Future, as a member of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. We are also honoured that next week the Emirate of Dubai will host the United Nations World Data Forum, in which Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed will participate. We are determined to continue empowering ourselves and our global systems in order to manage technology and ensure that it is used for the benefit of humankind. Based on our experience, we would like to make the following observations.

First, we must not underestimate the importance of documenting the values governing technology at the United Nations. The impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development is inherently linked to the fundamental values of technology. For example, we must ask ourselves whether or not technological development and its uses bring us closer to achieving our goal of eradicating poverty while providing education, combating climate change and achieving other Sustainable Development Goals. If we are to answer those questions, the international community must agree on the mechanisms and values that our management of technology and assessment of its uses will be based on.

Secondly, we must take advantage of both the public and private sectors when pursuing the use of technology in the service of the SDGs. To ensure that the United Nations performs an effective role in this area, we need to invite the private sector to participate in the relevant forums and meetings held in order to provide partners and institutions with the appropriate platform to enrich the debate on harnessing technology. For instance, the Famine Action Mechanism, which was launched this year during the high-level segment of the General Assembly at its seventy third session, was the outcome of collaboration among various institutions

and organizations aimed at predicting and responding to famine risks by using technology and artificial intelligence. We hope to see more such partnerships.

Thirdly, we must urgently address the so-called technology gap. Reports indicate that more than half of the world's population is not connected to the Internet and is therefore deprived of the opportunities provided by technology in the areas of education and communication. That disconnection from technology and the digital leads to their inability to participate in subsequent modern development activities.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates looks forward to working with Member States, the United Nations and all other stakeholders in order to achieve our desired goals.

Ms. Ahmad Rafie (Brunei Darussalam): We join others today in giving due recognition to the vital role of science, technology and innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the outset, we wish to recognize the invaluable discussions on this topic through various existing platforms, notably the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Notwithstanding those forums, we see merit in taking every opportunity to enhance our understanding of the impact that rapid technological change can have on the achievement of the SDGs, and to share knowledge and best experiences in addressing the potential challenges presented by technologies. Unprecedented and simultaneous advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles, 3D printing, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage, quantum computing and other technologies are redefining industries, blurring traditional boundaries and creating new opportunities. That has come to be known as the fourth industrial revolution, 4IR or Industry 4.0. The revolution is driven by digital data, connectivity and cyber systems. It has the potential to create impressive new, and sometimes unimaginable, business opportunities for those who are innovative and agile.

Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet. For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize this revolution with economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. All of those elements are interconnected and vital to the well-being of individuals and societies. Brunei Darussalam is cognizant of that. His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah and Yang Di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam recently stated that the country is witnessing the fourth industrial revolution, where digital technology is changing the way we live and work. The response to the revolution needs the involvement of all stakeholders — the public and private sectors as well as the community — with a view to supporting knowledge-based development of the nation.

For Brunei Darussalam, our national Vision 2035 aspires to create a well-educated and highly skilled society, improve the quality of life and generate a dynamic and sustainable economy. In order to realize the benefits and harness the opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution for its society and industries, which is expected to show its benefits over the next 10 to 20 years, Brunei Darussalam has worked to align its national strategies and the corresponding ecosystems so that the country is able to adapt and evolve with current realities.

Education is a key component in the national strategy to equip our youth with the necessary knowledge and skills so that they can positively contribute to national growth. There is continuous review and upgrading of our education system as a whole, from foundational to tertiary education and through to continuing vocational training. The aim is to ensure the continued availability of a relevant stream of skills, with a specific focus also on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Furthermore, as announced at the Legislative Council earlier this year, the Ministry of Education is placing great emphasis on improving the quality of education at all levels. That includes a focus on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning for twenty-first century skill sets. At the same time, it is also our hope that the Centre for Lifelong Learning can contribute to the development of a highly skilled workforce for a knowledge-based society, as envisaged in Vision 2035 and beyond.

To ensure that the country's governance, policies, laws and regulations are supportive of the advancement of industries and the creation of new ones, Brunei Darussalam launched a national information and communications technologies (ICT) white paper for the period 2016-2020. The white paper promotes a national digital strategy, with ICT playing a role as Brunei's

future engine of economic growth, and focuses on the six key sectors, namely, energy, health, transport, services, education and e-government. Dramatically scaling up the ICT infrastructure will put in place a system that is fast, secure and reliable enough to support the hundreds of billions of industrial devices that will connect to the global industrial Internet of Things. In addition, a supporting mechanism that will allow small and medium-sized enterprises to benefit from the digital economy, such as through e-commerce, is also being developed, from cybersecurity to e-payment. Brunei Darussalam has geared up its efforts to diversify its economy with manufacturing in various sectors and the digital economy having been identified as both clusters for development and priorities for attracting foreign direct investment.

Supplementary to that, Brunei Darussalam continues to establish connections to the global economy through enhanced economic cooperation, which includes capacity-building and technical assistance. That is evident through our participation in various platforms — such as the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — that support efforts to facilitate trade and investment, as well as in our involvement in various multilateral free trade agreements, such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, signed earlier this year, and the ASEAN regional comprehensive economic partnership, which is currently under negotiation. That ensures us greater market access and strengthens trade links with our partners, which is fundamental as we prepare ourselves to take advantage of potential opportunities and adapt to the rapid changes that the fourth industrial revolution brings about.

In conclusion, Brunei Darussalam will continue to place emphasis on the need to adopt and adapt to the changes of technology and the fourth industrial revolution, in particular its linkage to sustainable development. That is a part and parcel of our pledge to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and bring our people and planet closer together.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Hochschild and the co-Chair of the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, for their interesting and timely briefings.

I would also like to thank Mexico for last year initiating the agenda item "Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals", which provides a platform for discussing and promoting this topic. Israel is pleased to be part of the Group of Friends on Rapid Technological Change, which was created by Mexico. We actively participated and supported the Mexican resolution (resolution 72/242) under this item during the seventy-second session, and we will engage again on the updated draft resolution during this session.

Israel is on the cutting edge of global technological innovation. Every day, Israelis and Israeli companies are redefining what is possible. What was barely imagined yesterday is in our hands today. It is a challenge, but also an opportunity. The pace of change is now so rapid that we have come to rely on specialists to help inform policy decisions. In that regard, we welcome the establishment, earlier this year, of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. Israel is proud that Kira Radinsky, an Israeli, was appointed to the High-level Panel and is one of its youngest members. Ms. Radinsky has a remarkable record of achievements. Among her accomplishments, Ms. Radinsky developed an algorithm that can recognize early-warning signs for predicting global events, such as political riots and epidemics. Israel fully supports the work of the Secretary-General's Panel and looks forward to its final report.

I would like to congratulate Japan and Mexico on their leadership of the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. Science, technology and innovation require partnership and collaboration, which multi-stakeholder networks can provide. Education is vital to facing the fast-changing world. Preparing youth for rapid technological change is key. We need to empower young people and provide them with the tools and skills to be agents of change. One Israeli start-up, for example, teaches very young girls and boys the basics of programming through play, using physical bricks to build robots. Creativity and entrepreneurial spirit are needed to ensure that all girls and boys have the skills to benefit from, and eventually lead, technological change.

Women are an integral part of that change and must not be left behind. Technology can provide women and marginalized groups with new opportunities that they previously lacked. That includes access to

many services, such as finance, health, education and security. Technology affects every aspect of our lives today, but we must remember that technology is a tool at the service of people. It is up to us to make sure that we use technology to make a positive difference in order to help transform the world into a better place and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): Armenia welcomes the convening of today's meeting and the briefings delivered during the informal plenary meeting earlier today. This meeting provides a good opportunity to reflect on the transformative role of new technologies, which have served as a fundamental driver of change by enhancing possibilities for more inclusive and participatory societies. It is also the area that vividly demonstrates the most visible progress that we have all achieved throughout the transitioning process from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. We welcome the prioritization of new technologies by the Secretary-General and the establishment of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. We also welcome the Secretary-General's *Strategy On New Technologies* to enhance coordination and effectiveness across the work of United Nations agencies.

In Armenia, we are committed to embracing new technologies to create knowledge-based platforms for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In doing that, we rely on our human capital by placing high priority on providing youth across the country with digital training and access to information and communication technologies as a means for empowerment and capacity-building. The Tumo Centre for Creative Technologies, established in Armenia, is an example of a creative educational programme where thousands of teenagers have an opportunity to learn about new technologies through hands-on learning about the latest digital possibilities. The Tumo Centre is today expanding beyond the region, with new centres opening in Paris, Beirut, Moscow and Tirana, to allow young students to operate the latest digital tools and learn of and explore opportunities in a creative environment.

Armenia is a country with a very high rate of Internet penetration and is home to a vibrant and growing information technology industry that is using the potential of the tech community and diaspora links. New technologies, including digital technologies, are also being increasingly used to improve the efficiency of public services and the day-to-day operations of the Government. To that end, the Government of Armenia has embarked upon a digital agenda that aims to transform Armenia's economy into one that is high-tech and innovation-oriented.

Armenia hosted the Summit of the International Organization of la Francophonie last week in its capital, Yerevan. One of the central themes of the Summit was "Digital francophonie", which focused on supporting the involvement of youth and women and access to digital technologies.

The United Nations remains, through its various platforms, an important partner in helping to promote space for new ideas and creativity beyond the traditional mainstream development cooperation. Together with the United Nations country team, we have been setting up national platforms with a focus on the strong impact of reform and innovation in advancing smart development. Armenia's National Sustainable Development Goals Innovation Lab is a joint initiative of the Government of Armenia and the United Nations Development Programme to help accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the Lab's priorities is to look at ways to apply modern technology, including artificial intelligence and big data, in addressing public policy issues.

Our track record gives us the confidence to continue on the path of innovation, while exploring further spaces for experimentation with the use of new technologies for public benefit. We are keen to encourage further discussions on the role of new technologies and innovation in support of socially and environmentally impactful projects, which is particularly relevant in the case of lower-middle-income countries. We are fully committed to promoting technologies and innovation in our national and global policies, having embraced them as a priority agenda.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would first like to acknowledge the statements made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, Mr. Sven Mikser, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Mr. Luis Videgaray Caso.

Before addressing the topic that has brought us here this afternoon, we express our appreciation for the call made by Mr. Videgaray Caso regarding the attention that should be given to the migration phenomenon, the prioritizing of human rights and the protection

of migrants, which are fundamental with respect to comprehensively addressing the causes of immigration.

I would now like to state Guatemala's position on the impact of rapid technological change on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. First of all, we thank the delegations that have contributed to introducing and promoting this topic on the United Nations agenda, and we particularly commend the efforts of Japan and Mexico, which have aptly placed this issue at the forefront of the emerging issues in the debates of our Organization. We believe that rapid technological change, including exponential change, is increasingly relevant to all countries, particularly on the path to complying with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, given that it will affect myriad factors that influence progress in complying with each of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Much of the problem in developing policies that are consistent with the challenges presented by rapid technological change is linked to the lack of information, coupled with the opacity with which we anticipate the positive and negative effects of the application of new technologies in our societies, economies, the environment and even our politics. That is why we greatly appreciate the work of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and its inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation, which — in addition to contributing to the broad dialogue on the matter and thereby helping us to better understand the benefits, vulnerabilities and problems — provides us with useful elements in facing the challenges arising from this issue. Reliable information allows us to identify the causes of undesired effects or to correct those policies that, due to a lack of good planning and analysis, have had negative externalities.

An example of that is the orthodox, but mistaken, rhetoric of national economic policies that seeks to demonize free trade by declaring that the loss of jobs is caused by migrants, when that is not the case. According to the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, 80 per cent of jobs loss is due to the use of new technologies. That example suggests that by having clarity and certainty about the causes and effects of our public policies, we can better define them and minimize the negative effects.

In that connection, we must urgently promote knowledge of technologies and their impact on our daily lives. We therefore support this initiative and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and we will support the draft resolution on this highly important issue to be submitted for consideration by the Assembly at the current session.

Mr. Hattrem (Norway): First, let me express my gratitude to Mexico for bringing this very important topic to the forefront, both through a highly topical resolution (resolution 72/242) on the subject and by giving us an opportunity to share our reflections on the matter here today.

Digital technology has enormous potential to advance sustainable development. New technologies can increase the welfare of people throughout the world, but such rapid shifts also give rise to new challenges. It is therefore important that we closely examine the role digital technology can play in sustainable development, while increasing our awareness of the new set of challenges it creates. To illustrate that with an example, we need to continue to make steps to bridge the digital divides — including the gender digital divide — that might arise. If not, we risk contributing to uneven growth and rising inequality.

Today's mechanisms for international development cooperation were not set up in a way that allows us to adequately deal with the rapid shift in technology. Just recently, the World Bank announced that we will not reach our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) if we do not use digitalization and new technology effectively. We therefore need to close the knowledge gaps and promote interdisciplinary and system-wide collaboration in this field so that our development system not only keeps up with and responds to the challenges that accompany new technologies, but also harnesses and unveils the significant opportunities that arise.

The Secretary-General's establishment of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the *Strategy On New Technologies* shows that the United Nations is putting this topic at the top of its agenda. We welcome those important initiatives and look forward to following their progress along the way, as well as to the Panel's recommendations in nine months' time. We are pleased that our Minister of International Development, His Excellency Mr. Nikolai Astrup, is among the members of the Secretary-General's Panel, whose recommendations will draw from the wide experience and expertise from the public and private sectors, civil society, academia and the technical community. The Minister's Panel

membership follows the recent launch of a Norwegian strategy of digitalization and technology in Norway's international development cooperation. Our national experience has taught us that many companies and organizations with rich technological competence stand ready to contribute, but that our efforts and development strategies would stand to gain from a more systematic and goal-oriented approach.

I would argue that the same is valid here at the United Nations. For example, at the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, we have been presented with a steadily increasing number of exciting examples of new technologies and how they can be constructive towards our attainment of individual SDGs — as well as several Goals at the same time. The goal today and for our future is to create better lives and opportunities for more people on the planet and to leave no one behind. In order to reach that goal, we need to tap into the immense bank of knowledge that exists and convert challenges into opportunities.

Let me conclude by saying that Member States can count on Norway's support and commitment on this important subject. We look forward to continuing this important debate at the United Nations.

Mr. Jean (Canada): I would like to start by thanking Mexico for taking such an active leadership role in bringing the challenges and opportunities of rapid technological change to the table, including by initiating resolution 72/242, on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We hope this year's draft resolution will once again enjoy many co-sponsors, as it did last year, with Canada being among them.

Canada is proud to be an early and active member of the core group that Mexico has spearheaded on exponential technological change. In Canada's address to the General Assembly during high-level week (see A/73/PV.16), we spoke of the imperative to explore new ways of doing things. Sticking to old approaches will not help us meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is great potential in the domain of disruptive technologies for developing new, forward-looking approaches to advance the 2030 Agenda.

The benefits of disruptive technologies for development can be profound, but emerging technologies do not exist in a vacuum. They can, at a rapid pace, further exacerbate and replicate the existing inequalities, biases and prejudices that are systemic in the contexts in which they are developed and deployed. As we harness the potential of emerging technologies, it is critical to ensure that the ways in which we do so support economic and societal inclusion.

One of Canada's top priorities, as we consider ways to reap the benefits of disruptive technologies, is gender equality. That includes addressing a variety of issues — such as equal access for women to capital, markets, digital technology and business development services — as well as women's empowerment and full participation in leadership and decision-making processes. Reducing the barriers that women face and promoting the empowerment of women and girls will lead to benefits for their communities and have a variety of positive spin-offs that will contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Despite the rapid proliferation of disruptive technologies globally, serious digital divides remain between and within countries, including across gender, geography, age and income dimensions. They reflect inequalities in access to the social, economic and cultural benefits of increased connectivity.

Even in countries like Canada, connectivity is a challenge. Many of our remote, northern communities have little, poor or no connectivity. We are working to help address the issue. Over the past two years, Canada's Government has built partnerships with the private sector to improve connectivity. We have also seen communities take matters into their own hands and begin setting up community networks to bring the digital world to their schools, hospitals, small businesses and local Governments. They have done so creatively and within the existing regulatory framework for service providers. In that regard, South Africa is an innovator and role model in allowing community set-ups like the Zenzeleni Networks, which provide affordable access to small communities.

As we continue to hold discussions that contribute to shaping future approaches, I cannot overstate the importance that Canada places on ensuring the inclusion of all stakeholders. As today's discussion highlights, together we can draw on a diversity of thought, experience, skills, knowledge and ideas to ensure emerging technologies are developed and deployed in ways that can support the future we want to

see, a future that supports better outcomes for all and in which no one is left behind.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Mr. Ogilvy (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development): Rapid innovation, including digitalization, offers enormous potential to boost productivity, incomes and well-being in all of our countries. It is our hope that they will accelerate efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to leave no one behind.

We are encouraged by the potential for new technologies to help bridge divides and to reduce inequalities. The potential for developing countries to harness the benefits of leapfrogging is particularly encouraging. The potential for digital technologies to help overcome geographical barriers to accessing markets — for land-locked countries or for small island economies, for example — is also clear.

We need to ensure that our investments in technology and in public goods, such as education and digital skills, help to tackle inequalities rather than accentuate them. Two hundred and fifty million fewer women than men today have access to Internet technologies and, despite progress, women and girls remain underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects and career areas. Discriminatory social norms and institutions continue to be significant barriers in all of our economies.

We know that innovation will disrupt labour markets, as it has done in the past — affecting the distribution of jobs, wages and income. When it comes to our economies, the diffusion of digital technologies remains incomplete and uneven across firms, likely contributing to the widening productivity gap between global frontier firms and the rest.

The challenge ahead is not to put the brakes on; rather, it is a matter of working together to put the right policy responses in place to ensure that the benefits of innovation are broadly shared. That includes strengthening international cooperation to address shared challenges — the taxation of increasingly digital economies, for example, or enhancing collaboration on digital security issues, which very often transcend national borders. The role of national science, technology and innovation road maps and policies will be crucial in all of those efforts.

My organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), will publish next month its 2018 edition of the *Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook*. For the first time, it will contain a special chapter on such policies for the SDGs. Its recommendations will be wide-ranging. It will show, for example, that national science, technology and innovation policies are too narrowly focused on national priorities, with insufficient focus and funding to target the global public goods that we all know will be crucial to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our forthcoming report will also highlight how traditional science policy needs to be revisited. In areas such as artificial intelligence, gene editing and neurosciences, for example, the science and technology are moving faster than our legal and ethical rules. We need new science governance models that are aligned with that reality.

The OECD is already working hand in hand with others in many of those areas, including the United Nations family, to help put evidence on the table, drill down into the challenges and help design solutions. Our Going Digital initiative aims to dismantle the silos that still prevail in public policymaking today and to advance more coherent and comprehensive approaches.

As Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAffee of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology wrote,

> "Computers and other digital advances are doing for mental power ... what the steam engine and its descendants did for muscle power."

Our collective responsibility is to ensure that those changes deliver a more harmonious, more resilient, more inclusive and ultimately more sustainable global economy. I hope that the OECD can make a meaningful contribution in that shared endeavour.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 133.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the interpreters for remaining with us past 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/73/PV.23

General Assembly
Seventy-third session

Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Friday, 19 October 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 68 and 13

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/73/269 and A/73/270)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/273)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

The President: It is a great pleasure to join members today. Allow me to thank those members who participated over the course of the three-day 2018 Africa Dialogue Series. I am informed that many pertinent and invaluable points have emerged from the proceedings, which I believe underscores the importance of that dialogue. It is particularly reassuring that the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is seen as being stronger than at any other time in history. That is good for Africa. It is also good for the world. We can all benefit from that lesson as we work to strengthen multilateralism.

In that connection, the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires the continuing support of the international community. Africa also continues to be a leader in other areas. I commend the fact that Africa has more women in peacekeeping missions than any other region. Approximately 64 per cent of female peacekeepers come from Africa. That is in addition to the fact that Africa already contributes nearly half of all peacekeepers. In that regard, I would also like to echo other colleagues and the international community in commending Ethiopia on achieving gender parity in its Cabinet. It has joined a select few countries that have achieved that ratio. Likewise, I must acknowledge our newest Nobel laureates — Mr. Denis Mukwege of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ms. Nadia Murad of Iraq — who have worked tirelessly to help end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict. That is remarkable, and we thank them for their commitment.

We are here today to reflect on the three reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly on agenda item 68, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273). I commend the Secretary-General for the quality of the reports before us. Allow me to make two very quick points.

First, I am pleased to see that the report (A/73/269) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) notes that African countries continue to make

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progress on the implementation of each of NEPAD's priority areas. The programme for infrastructure development in Africa, for instance, is addressing the infrastructure deficit on the continent. The interregional highways, one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects, will help to link Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. That physical integration is being mirrored through trade policy. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area, for example, represents a crucial step towards the creation of a single African market. Finally, progress towards the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) opens up a vast horizon of opportunities for the transformation of the continent. In that context, I note how closely that initiative is linked to the decent-work priority of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. In the case of Africa, the huge youth population alone makes progress on the CAADP a necessity. Each of those developments points to major shifts forward towards the African Union's vision for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa.

However, my second point is that greater support is needed, in my view, to accelerate and sustain progress. Commitments to official development assistance and other financing, including financing for indirect investment, technology transfer, capacity-building and market access, must be fulfilled in the spirit of true partnership. African countries, the regional economic communities and the African Union have made great strides in building African capacities to tackle threats to peace and security. In order to support those efforts, there should be adequate, predictable and sustained financing for African Union-led peace operations authorized by the Security Council.

Africa is at the heart of everything that we do at United Nations. We cannot succeed elsewhere if we have not succeeded in Africa.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States, and would like to align myself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273) on the items under discussion. We wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his leadership and continued commitment in placing Africa's agenda at the heart of the United Nations development system. It is a testimony to the valuable partnership that has continued to exist between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations.

This year's general debate coincided with the Africa Dialogue Series, which served as a valuable occasion to highlight the synergies linking the various processes and the seriousness that must be attached to the development needs of the continent. There is no doubt that the United Nations-AU partnership for Africa's development is a key tool in strengthening complementarities and in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU's Agenda 2063. We are pleased that this year the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa adopted a new approach for the Africa Dialogue Series, and we commend its efforts in advancing Africa's development agenda. We believe that such synergy and balance are fundamental to efforts to address the particular development needs of our continent. As such, it should be sustained and improved upon in the coming years.

The African Group appreciates the valuable analysis, information and policy recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's reports. They address critical issues in the debate and advocacy for Africa's inclusive growth and sustainable development. Since the adoption by the African Heads of State and Government of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Partnership has continued to reflect Africa's vision and strategic framework for the political and socioeconomic transformation of various priority areas, including agriculture, food security, climate change and natural-resource management, as well as regional integration and infrastructure. NEPAD has remained committed to facilitating and implementing Africa's priority programmes and to the consolidation of positive policy initiatives already adopted by African Member States for the transformation of the continent. We take this opportunity to express appreciation to our development partners for their assistance in the progress that the continent has made in the implementation of its various programmes and projects. We further request all partners to support efforts by African countries to promote and maintain macroeconomic stability, including by facilitating the development and transfer of technology to African countries.

The existence of the global digital divide highlights the need for further investment and the allocation of adequate resources in order to prevent Africa from being left behind on the path to the information society,

as the Secretary-General warns in his report (A/73/269). We note the findings of the Secretary-General's report, particularly the existence of obstacles to the realization of the full potential of the application of information and communications technologies, especially in Africa. The harmonization of the policy and regulatory framework in the information and communications technology sector is gaining momentum on the continent, and the African Union is making considerable efforts in that direction. We therefore call on the international community to take the relevant steps towards the achievement of a people-centred, development-oriented information society that is comprehensive in its inclusivity and committed to the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

The African Group notes with great satisfaction that the report of the Secretary-General emphasizes that agriculture remains at the centre of Africa's development agenda. As indicated in the report, Africa has enormous agricultural potential. The continent boasts the largest share of the world's uncultivated fertile land, abundant water resources and proximity to transportation links and regional markets. It is therefore natural that our agriculture forms a significant portion of the economies of all African countries. As a sector with the potential to create jobs for African youth and thereby improve their livelihood, we are convinced that, with adequate investment, African agriculture can contribute to intra-Africa trade and development and economic diversification. However, in order to eradicate poverty, which remains an overarching goal for the African Group, such assistance and investment must be socially responsible, environmentally sustainable and ultimately beneficial to all, including smallholder farmers.

The signing in 2017 of the Joint United Nations-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the follow-up signing in January of the AU-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demonstrate the commitment of the two organizations to aligning their cooperation with priority areas. In that regard, the Group stresses the need to promote an effective and efficient implementation, follow-up and review of both Frameworks so as to maximize their impact and results on the ground. I would like to stress that a multifaceted approach, involving the mobilization of resources and the strengthening of global partnerships for development, is required in order to achieve that lofty objective.

Sustainable development is a collective opportunity and responsibility that should be achieved through multilateral cooperation, the honouring of international commitments and the provision of means of implementation support to developing countries. We are concerned about the growing debt crisis, and we request assistance aimed at ensuring that our volatility is curtailed. In that connection, we request assistance to strengthen the national capacities of African States to access sources of revenue that can be used to boost growth and development. It is also important that developed countries and official development assistance (ODA) providers continue to uphold their commitments, in keeping with their previous undertakings to scale up ODA efforts.

The African Group further agrees with the Secretary-General that natural disasters and the effects of climate change severely affect vulnerable regions and populations, particularly those of Africa. Africa is essentially in a disadvantaged position in the pursuit of sustainable development. As such, increased international assistance in the areas of financing, trade, technology transfer and debt relief will be essential for efforts to support African countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We appeal to the international community to enhance support and fulfil its commitments by taking further action in areas critical to Africa's economic and social development.

The African Group agrees with the Secretary-General that illicit financial flows deprive the continent of vital resources for financing its development priorities. Stopping those illicit flows and repatriating illicit assets and funds to their countries of origin will provide the region with increased resources for financing health, education, infrastructure and critical development needs. We urge development partners to support efforts by the African Union and African countries to stop that menace through improved transparency in tax systems, as well as by disclosing the full beneficial ownership structure of companies.

We note the negative impact of gender disparity manifested in the culture and norms of some African countries. While the leaders of the region continue to take steps to address that challenge in the interest of all, the African Union, through its various educational

initiatives and the African Peer Review Mechanism, will continue to persevere in the right direction with regard to that very sensitive issue.

Finally, peace, security and good governance are of the utmost priority in all development processes. While Africa has experienced a period of sustained economic growth and social progress in the past two decades, the effects of wars and violent crimes still persist. We request the United Nations system, partners and all Member States to continue to assist African countries emerging from conflict in their efforts to build national capacities by fulfilling commitments relevant to creating an environment conducive to peace, security and sustainable development in Africa.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, I wish to express our appreciation for the valuable analysis, information and policy recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's reports (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), which contribute to the debate on issues that are crucial to Africa's inclusive growth and sustainable development.

The African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and its first 10-year implementation plan demonstrate Africa's shared visions and actions towards peace and development. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 further underscored the shared commitment of the international community to working tirelessly to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions in a balanced and integrated manner.

The Group recognizes the complementarities between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, it is crucial that we continue to mobilize international support for the implementation of those Agendas in order to achieve greater synergies between the regional and international development frameworks. Three years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, it is evident that realizing the shared promise of the two Agendas of leaving no one behind is contingent upon our collective capacity to mobilize sufficient means of implementation, including financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, which must be as ambitious as the goals themselves.

In the same vein, scaling up international support is crucial for building resilience and promoting sustainability. In that context, the Group welcomes the monitoring mechanism report's in-depth review of the implementation of commitments by African countries and development partners in various development areas (A/73/270). As such, the recommendations of the report should contribute to better informed policy responses to development challenges and enhance the global partnership for development in those critical development areas.

The Group re-emphasizes the critical role of official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI), which remain major sources of financing for development in Africa. The Group is deeply concerned about the fact that both ODA and FDI to Africa have declined over the past years. Therefore, the Group would like to reiterate that the fulfilment of all ODA commitments remains crucial, including the commitment on the part of many developed countries to achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for ODA for developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to least developed countries. We urge those that have not fulfilled their commitments to step up efforts towards their ODA targets.

The Group recalls that African countries have taken numerous steps to address peace and security challenges at the national and regional levels, including the need to deal with terrorism and instability. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that in order to complement and strengthen African efforts to address challenges to peace and security on the continent, it is critical that partners enhance their support for African peace and security activities and help to build the continent's own capacities to prevent and resolve conflict through increased assistance. We therefore maintain the need for the United Nations system to support African regional and subregional organizations in assisting the efforts of African countries to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa and to end all wars in Africa by 2020.

In conclusion, the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017 and of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in January demonstrate the commitment of the two organizations to aligning

their cooperation to Africa's needs and priorities. It is imperative to promote an effective and efficient implementation of, follow-up to and review of both Frameworks to maximize the impact and results on the ground.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and my own country, Viet Nam.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, we thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), which have provided a comprehensive review of the progress made during the reporting period, as well as constructive and practical insights into the way forward.

ASEAN reaffirms its solidarity with Africa towards the realization of our shared aspirations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for growth, prosperity and sustainable development. We fully support the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which will provide a strong foundation for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. In that connection, we welcome the good progress made over the past years in achieving the priorities set by NEPAD, in particular in infrastructure, agriculture, education, gender mainstreaming and good governance.

We are pleased to note the positive impact of the improving global economic situation on African economies. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area in March will certainly spur greater intra-African trade and economic integration. We know the persistent challenges in the areas of agricultural productivity, food security, economic diversification, market access and the lack of financing and capacity. Nonetheless, it is encouraging to see that many African countries have continued to intensify their efforts and seize opportunities to accelerate progress on sustainable development in the region. We welcome efforts to strengthen the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa in order to effectively implement Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

ASEAN is also of the view that it is important to align our ASEAN Community Vision 2025 with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to actively explore ways to implement the two Agendas in an integrated way. We believe there is much we can learn from one another in that respect.

As many of our leaders affirmed at the general debate last month, our common pursuit of durable peace and sustainable development is contingent upon our ability to build robust global partnerships with a strong and effective United Nations at their core. For its part, ASEAN will continue to work together with all friends and partners, including in Africa, to uphold the values of multilateralism and honour the international frameworks and agreements to which we have committed ourselves. That is part of our shared responsibility to our people and planet.

ASEAN as a whole, including its individual member States, looks forward to strengthening its partnership with Africa in implementing those global frameworks and commitments. Indeed, we believe that there is scope for greater collaboration between ASEAN and Africa. In particular, there is great potential for our regional organizations and member States to enhance our linkages and knowledge-sharing in various fields, such as agriculture, education, information and communications technologies, trade and investment and infrastructure development, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

In November 2017, manufacturers and technology firms from across Southeast Asia and Africa gathered in Johannesburg for the first Africa-ASEAN Business Expo and Forum. That inaugural event was aimed at creating a platform for linking businesses from Africa and ASEAN and catalysing trade and investment opportunities between the two regions.

In conclusion, we are in full agreement that development partners, international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations and the international community must continue to support African countries in their pursuit of sustainable peace and development. For its part, ASEAN remains steadfast in its support for the efforts of our African friends and the international community to bring about meaningful progress in the implementation of the NEPAD agenda for the benefit of Africa and of all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mrs. Pape (European Union): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's latest progress report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/73/269). As a strong supporter of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) from its very beginning, the European Union welcomes the report's alignment with Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the report's overall finding that African countries continue to make progress in the implementation of NEPAD priorities. We recognize the importance of infrastructure for the continent's industrialization and regional integration and the shortfall in the investments needed to lift Africa to global standards. We welcome African initiatives to address that shortfall, such as the 5% Agenda initiative, recently launched by the Continental Business Network of the NEPAD Agency. The European Union has long-standing experience as a partner of the region in cutting-edge regional investment projects that are similar to those envisaged by the NEPAD initiative. An example of those projects is the Caprivi Interconnector linking power grids in southern Africa.

With the European External Investment Plan, adopted in September 2017, the European Union is further enhancing the scale of its support by crowding in investments from financial institutions and the private sector through a €4.5 billion guarantee and blending fund, complemented by technical assistance and support aimed at improving the investment climate. In addition to the existing investment facilities of €2.6 billion, that fund is expected to leverage more than €44 billion in investments by 2020.

The European Union remains by far the most important destination for African exports. We believe that there is considerable scope to increase the share of intra-African trade and welcome the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement in Kigali in March. We encourage signatories to ensure timely ratification so as to enable the Agreement to enter into force. The European Union and its member States attribute the same importance to high-quality education as is outlined in the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063. In that context, we welcome the NEPAD Agency's support for efforts by countries to achieve gender parity in education. We recommend that those efforts be scaled up and integrated into comprehensive national policies. The monitoring of those policies could become part and parcel of the African Peer Review Mechanism.

The European Union and its member States are encouraged by the revitalization of the African Peer Review Mechanism. Peers are often in a better position to address governance issues, and that will also strengthen African ownership of reform agendas. Success will, however, be measured less by the number of participating countries than by the results achieved. In that context, we urge the improved follow-up and implementation of the African Peer Review programme of action. We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General about the recent rapid increase in the debt levels of many African countries, especially the share of debt held by non-Paris Club countries. Prior to that increase, there had been a massive reduction in African debt levels since the beginning of the century through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, to which the European Union's collective financing contributed 41 per cent of the overall contributions.

We echo the warning in the Secretary-General's report (A/73/269) that excessive borrowing can potentially choke growth and development, undermining hard-won socioeconomic gains through debt relief. In that context, we would like to stress the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals and recall, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal target 17.4. Against that backdrop, it seems evident that the forthcoming second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which is known as BAPA+40 and is to be held in Buenos Aires in March 2019, presents an opportunity to address the challenge that should not be missed.

The European Union continues to firmly stand by its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, of which the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is an integral part. We reiterate the need to facilitate the use of all sources of financing, including international and national private investment, domestic public resources and official development assistance (ODA), and underline the potential of innovative finance. With regard to official development assistance, the European Union has maintained its role as the largest provider, accounting for over half of total ODA and increasing its share from 0.31 per cent of its gross national income in 1999 to 0.50 per cent in 2017.

Africa remains a priority for the European Union and its member States. That is reflected in the

Commission President Juncker's announcement, during his 12 September State of the Union 2018 address, of a new Africa-Europe alliance aimed at deepening economic relations and boosting investment and jobs.

Mr. Srivihok (Thailand): Allow me at the outset to align my statement with that delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports submitted under this agenda item (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273).

Africa is rising, brimming with prospects and potential. We celebrate the fifty-fifth anniversary of the formation of the African Union (AU) this year. Thailand congratulates our African friends on their tireless efforts and solidarity in working towards an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa. Much progress has been made during the first 10-year implementation plan of the AU Agenda 2063. In particular, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the signing of the single African air transport market agreement will no doubt promote greater regional integration and business opportunities for African peoples and the world.

Although geographical distance may separate Thailand and Africa, Thailand and African nations have always enjoyed long-standing and friendly relations, which are further enriched by growing economic ties and cooperation towards sustainable development, peace and stability and public health.

Looking at Africa today, we cannot ignore its growing role in the global economy and the opportunity that it represents. The World Bank currently lists Thailand as ASEAN's largest trading partner in Africa, and we see Thai investment growing in the continent's booming sectors, including the energy, fishery, infrastructure, automobile and tourism sectors. At the same time, we are aware of the challenges faced by the least developed countries in global trade, and Thailand has been doing its part to promote market access of African goods in our country through the World Trade Organization's duty-free and quota-free scheme, which in 2015 we committed to implementing for five years.

Development cooperation is another area where Thailand and Africa share a common aspiration. Thailand has always been a strong supporter of South-South and triangular cooperation, which aims not only to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. Our development cooperation in Africa follows a demand-driven approach that aims to build strength towards the goal of self-reliance. Through the Thailand-Africa Partnership for Sustainable Development, we are set to share the best practices of our home-grown development approach with Africa in areas including agriculture, human resources development and public health.

Development cannot be sustainable without peace. Thailand stresses the importance of creating conditions conducive to sustainable peace and commends the positive trends in Africa. Thailand has taken part in past and present United Nations peacekeeping missions alongside many African nations. We are proud to say that our peacekeepers are early peacebuilders and that they approach their mandated tasks with our late King's sufficiency economy philosophy in their hearts and minds. This year, our horizontal military engineering company will join the peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

While Africa has made remarkable development progress, one of the most challenging tasks is promoting livelihoods and ensuring healthy populations in the process of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while leaving no one behind. Thailand commends the continuing role of the international community in the progress achieved on malaria control and prevention. We need to redouble our efforts to end malaria by 2030, as envisioned by SDG target 3.3. We reiterate our continued support to our African friends through our capacity-building programmes in health-care management as well as in the prevention and management of epidemics.

In conclusion, let us look ahead. One critical objective for Thailand during its chairmanship of ASEAN next year will be promoting cooperation and partnership for sustainable development with our partners around the world. In that context, Thailand reiterates its commitment to cooperating with Africa in the pursuit of our common aspirations to prosperity, sustainable development, peace and a healthier world.

Ms. Alnaser (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation has the pleasure of congratulating Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés on presiding over the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We

look forward to the positive work that will be done during this session.

I would like to commend the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/269) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We have looked with great interest at that effective partnership between the United Nations and the African continent, which has culminated in the strengthening of peace, security and stability on the continent. The aim is to address the political, economic and development challenges in Africa so that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be effectively implemented.

In the context of the Secretary-General's review of the development efforts made by the Organization in conjunction with the African Union (AU), my country supports all measures undertaken to promote sustainable development in Africa and to strengthen cooperation with the African continent through the AU, in particular the agreement signed between the United Nations and the AU in 2017, as it represents a basic pillar to support development on that continent.

My country commends the achievements of African countries in the area of development. We also support all joint efforts between the United Nations and the AU aimed at establishing a common strategy in order to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 for African development, which was announced at the African summit held in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 January. That framework seeks to expedite the implementation of Agenda 2063 and to integrate the United Nations and AU Agendas into one to ensure their effective implementation, while contributing to the achievement of a lasting, people-centred environmental structural transformation in Africa.

Despite all the gains that have been made, we still remain concerned about the many obstacles that exist. High-ranking officials in Africa, the AU and the United Nations must enhance those gains to the fullest by implementing the following points.

First, they must find solutions to the many conflicts and situations of instability in various parts of Africa through cooperation and support to peacekeeping operations in the various African regions concerned, as well as provide support to African peace operations. Secondly, they must provide support to the security and police sectors in certain African States in order to protect defenceless civilians from any violations to which they might be subjected. Thirdly, they must strengthen human rights, social justice and all policies related to conduct and discipline in the area of sexual exploitation and abuse, which is important for the support of AU peace operations.

My country takes pride in our historical relationship with African States. We enjoy observer status in the AU. In 2013, my country hosted the third Africa-Arab Summit under the theme "Partners in development and investment", at which His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced an initiative to grant soft loans to non-Arab African countries for five years through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Furthermore, during the Summit the State of Kuwait announced that it would invest $1 billion through the General Investment Authority in cooperation with the World Bank, its affiliates and the China-Africa Development Fund. That amount of money would be invested in the infrastructure of the African continent.

Through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which was established more than 56 years ago, my country has contributed effectively to the support of sustainable development in many countries of the world, especially countries on the African continent. The Kuwait Fund has cooperated with nearly 42 African countries. We have focused particularly on the road sector and have diversified our development projects to include the granting of soft loans and other non-refundable loans by the Kuwait Fund and the Kuwaiti Government. The Kuwait Fund granted 312 soft loans during the fiscal year 2017-2018.

The State of Kuwait has also participated effectively through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, which was launched in 1996 by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We have also participated in the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, and the Kuwait Fund has rescheduled its loans to the borrowing countries. The Kuwait Fund has also implemented debt-relief agreements with 27 African States.

In conclusion, my country is committed to helping the least developed countries because we fully support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We hope that African States will benefit from the report of the Secretary-General on supporting development and stability in Africa.

Mr. Annakou (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on this agenda item (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273). I also wish to thank Ms. Bience Gawanas, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, and Mr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency, for their efforts in supporting the African continent.

We also align ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States. I would now like to express the concerns of my country, Libya.

This meeting on NEPAD is being held three years after world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the main objective of which is to leave no one behind, and African leaders launched the African Union's Agenda 2063, a 50-year plan aimed at establishing peace, security and development in Africa, and its first 10-year human-based implementation plan for achieving development.

Today, I will focus on the relationship between development and security — as there can be no security without peace and no peace without security — in the light of the present report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/73/273). This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the annual report of the Secretary-General on that subject.

According to the report, conflicts in Africa tend to be intra-State rather than inter-State conflicts, and they have regional dimensions. They are typically transnational conflicts in which multiple actors participate. Conflict prevention constitutes the overriding mandate of the United Nations and represents an integral part of the work of regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union. The question that should be asked today is what has the international community done to help African States establish security and stability. More importantly, what have the African States or the African Union done to help a founding member, such as Libya, to tackle its difficult circumstances?

Libya is the northern gate of Africa, and instability in my country means an expansion of conflict. Have the countries of the African Union helped Libya, or have they instead contributed to exacerbating the situation in my country? To set the record straight, allow me to be transparent and clear in addressing certain issues to which my country, Libya, has been subjected since 2011. Those issues reveal what Libya has been going through during a difficult transition phase.

First, political instability, conflicts and armed clashes have often led to a weakened State and prevented Libya from safeguarding its borders. That in turn enables gangs trafficking in arms and persons to practise exploitation in countries of origin and destination. Because of its current circumstances, Libya, as a transit country, is subjected to massive waves of illegal migration from sub-Saharan countries. That has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Libya owing to the inability of my country to control its borders, while neighbouring States have lagged in their efforts to monitor their borders. Countries of origin put the blame on the transit country, which is the victim and not the cause of the problem. The countries of origin and destination should assume their responsibilities towards illegal migrants, who suffer as a result of the actions of trafficking networks in those countries. Those networks are the driving force behind the risky migration in the desert and on the seas.

It is necessary to tackle the root causes of the problem, not its symptoms, which requires genuine development in the countries of origin with the help of the destination countries, specifically through the transfer of technology, capacity-building, job creation and the provision of support for small and medium-sized businesses, as well as action to combat criminal gangs in the countries of origin and destination and the transit countries. Once stability is achieved in Libya and reconstruction is initiated, we can assure Members that we will be able to accommodate a large number of our African brothers as workers, in a regular and legal way that protects the rights of both the Libyan State and African workers.

Secondly, with regard to sustainable development and maintaining the rights of future generations, which constitutes one of its pillars, I would refer to the assets of the Libyan sovereign wealth fund that have been frozen pursuant to various relevant Security Council resolutions. Those assets are losing value owing to the sanctions regime imposed since 2011, which is supposed to preserve those assets and funds. However, in reality, the sanctions have caused those funds and assets to incur enormous ongoing losses. Since March 2016, we have provided the Security Council and its

Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya with extensive information about the huge losses incurred. We have requested that the Security Council amend the current sanctions regime so as to improve the management of those frozen assets without lifting the freeze in order to prevent such losses, which are not inevitable, and maintain that part of the Libyan people's wealth for the sake of future generations. However, the Security Council has not responded to our repeated requests, which we regret. What have the three African countries that are members of the Security Council done in that regard? Did they support our interests and defend those legitimate, fair and urgent requests?

Thirdly, what is worse is that many African States have exploited the difficult transitional stage in Libya and started to confiscate and seize Libyan investments in their territories under false pretexts that run counter to signed agreements and international law. In that regard, we confirm that Libya intends to take all appropriate legal measures to restore its assets and its losses. The position of all those countries towards Libya during the current phase will constitute a fundamental factor in our future relations with them.

Fourthly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda have called for the mobilization of the necessary financial resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of mobilizing those resources, it is time for all countries to cooperate in order to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and to establish mechanisms for returning stolen funds to their legitimate owners. In that regard, Libya looks forward to receiving help from all those countries to which the funds of the Libyan people have been smuggled. Those funds should be disclosed and must be returned to Libya in order to cover part of the funding needed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, we call on States Members of the United Nations not to let their institutions serve as safe havens for the smuggled funds and to stop the smuggling of money and the encouragement of the corrupt perpetrators.

From this rostrum, I ask the General Assembly once again if those illicit flows of funds would have been possible had developed States not allowed their institutions to serve as safe havens for corrupt money. Would the corruption and illegal flows, which have amounted to $100 billion from Africa annually, according to reports of the United Nations and international financial institutions, have continued without the acquiescence of certain developed countries? Will the African Union set an example by addressing money flows and money smuggling within the continent, namely, from African States to African safe havens? Will African States stop serving as safe havens for corrupt money?

In conclusion, the difficult transitional stages and the many internal concerns that we are currently experiencing have prevented Libya from playing an effective role in Africa. However, we assure the Assembly that Libya will establish stability and soon stand as a civil State based on the separation of powers, the rule of law and the peaceful rotation of power. We will perform our effective role in true partnership with Africa in order to advance the New Partnership for Africa's Development and help to ensure progress, growth and prosperity for African countries. That can be done through coordination, joint work and commitment to the cooperation agreements that have been signed with many African countries. We will also work together to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 so that Africa will become a developed continent capable of contributing positively to the advancement and prosperity of humankind.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): The theme of the current session of the General Assembly is "Making the United Nations relevant to all people: global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies". In that spirit, we need to focus on empowering one another, strengthening ties and embracing the global responsibility to achieve worldwide sustainable development.

As highlighted in the most recent reports of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), African countries continue to make progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 in areas ranging from health care and education to agriculture and women's empowerment. Africa faces many of the same development challenges that Israel has been tackling since its establishment 70 years ago, only a few years before many African countries also gained their independence.

Diplomatic relations between Israel and Africa go back to the 1950s when Golda Meir — Israel's then Foreign Minister and later Prime Minister — visited the continent for the first time. The aim of that historic trip was to share Israel's experience and know-how with many of those newly formed nations. That was when she decided to create Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV), which is responsible for the design, coordination and implementation of the State of Israel's worldwide development and cooperation programmes.

For the past 60 years, MASHAV has worked with our African partners in the fields of health care, agriculture, education, women's empowerment and innovation. Some 70,000 trainees have benefited from training programmes within Israel and in on-site courses throughout the continent. MASHAV follows a train-the-trainer capacity-building approach. That ensures that African States can continue to rely on their own expertise in future generations, making the development in question truly sustainable.

In Ethiopia, for example, MASHAV works with the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture to promote economic growth in rural areas by organizing workshops on horticulture production and marketing for small farmers. That training has led to concrete developments, including increased avocado exports and enhanced irrigation efficiency.

In another project, MASHAV partnered with local authorities in Ghana to reduce infant mortality and improve access to high-quality health care by enhancing the professional capacity of hospitals and medical staff. We also work with the Government on another project to improve childhood education.

In Kenya, Israel is working in cooperation with UN-Women and Kenyatta University to develop leadership skills among women, empowering them to engage effectively in political processes and to bring about change in business and public life.

Israel is currently engaged in several agricultural projects, including a rural development centre in Rwanda to support the country's national plan to modernize its agricultural sector and alleviate rural poverty. All those projects and other MASHAV projects on the continent not only benefit local populations but also help Africa to achieve the SDGs. In that context, I would also like to note that next month, Israel will host a conference on the effect of climate change on Africa. According to United Nations experts on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other climate models, Africa is one of the continents most vulnerable to climate change. The conference will attempt to examine the measures that should be implemented in order to assist the continent in combating the effects of climate change and its ramifications.

While time does not permit me to elaborate on all the projects and partnerships between African States and Israel, I want to highlight one Israeli non-governmental organization that is doing tremendous work in Africa to save children's lives. Save a Child's Heart, which recently won the 2018 United Nations Population Award, provides free heart surgery to children in need in many African countries. That humanitarian organization not only brings thousands of children to Israel for heart surgery not available in their own countries, but also trains African doctors and medical personnel to perform such operations back home.

Our relationship with Africa has never been stronger, and increasing those ties is a top priority for Israel. A testament to that is the fact that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has visited Africa three times in the past two years. I wish to reaffirm Israel's commitment to continuing its efforts to support the development of Africa. Israel will continue to share its knowledge and expertise so as to inspire and support fellow nations, communities and individuals on their journey to achieve sustainable development.

Through the exchange of ideas and strategies, our nations can combat mutual challenges together, using sustainable solutions proved to work. We stand with our African partners to build a brighter future.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We note with satisfaction that African countries are making consistent progress towards socioeconomic transformation. Progress in areas such as industry, agriculture, health care, education, information and communications technology and innovation is of particular importance. The establishment of a single African air transport market and an African free trade area serve as important steps towards economic development and regional integration. Lifting tariff and non-tariff barriers will help to boost intra-African trade, and regular direct flights among countries will create momentum for the development of industry, trade and tourism. It is evident that such efforts will,

ultimately, help to eradicate poverty. We believe that African countries need to determine independently, on the basis of their national priorities, their policies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Along those lines, States can leverage their comparative advantages and study the lessons and experience of other global markets. We value the desire of countries to boost mechanisms for domestic resource mobilization and expand public-private partnerships, including by establishing independent tax authorities, introducing a value-added tax, ensuring transparency in revenues and expenditure and improving the overall business climate. At the same time, it is clear that the international community, in particular developed countries, need to continue to deliver assistance to Africa as it seeks to achieve sustainable development.

The Russian Federation is a long-standing partner in and donor to international efforts to deliver multifaceted assistance to African countries. Specifically with regard to trade, we provide broad concessional arrangements to a host of countries. With regard to African goods, a concessional duty and tariff regime covers the lion's share of Russian imports from Africa. Russia is also proactively helping to ease the debt burden of African countries. To date, under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, Africa's principal debt has been written off, amounting to more than $20 billion. Under the Debt for Development programme, intergovernmental agreements are being implemented with Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania. More than 11,000 African students attend Russian tertiary education institutions. The Russian Federation provides contributions to international assistance programmes for Africa through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the International Civil Defence Organization. We have contributed $20 million to implement the World Bank programme to combat malaria in African countries. We have also contributed $18 million to WHO to implement the global polio eradication initiative.

The Russian Federation is keen to develop wide-ranging partnerships with African countries. We stand ready to continue to facilitate sustained economic growth and greater employment in order to develop infrastructure and overcome health-care challenges.

Mr. Al-Kuwari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting to discuss the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

We have taken note of the reports of the Secretary-General under this agenda item (A/73/269, A/73/270). One of those two reports refers to the formidable challenges that African countries face in achieving sustainable development and the importance of the international community providing more support through financing, trade and debt relief. All those issues are crucial in supporting African countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/73/273) contains many important recommendations and conclusions. It indicates the importance of taking all necessary measures to help African countries avert the outbreak or recurrence of crises and violent conflicts, which have a negative impact on civilian populations and undermine institutions and the capacity for achieving peace and development.

It goes without saying that addressing the root causes of conflict is important in order to achieve the goal of ensuring a conflict-free and harmonious Africa, in the context of implementing Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes the importance of supporting NEPAD and Agenda 2063, seen as an integral part of the sustainable development agenda.

The State of Qatar believes that the achievement of security, stability and peace for all nations contributes significantly to efforts to attain sustainable development and to change people's lives for the better. The State of Qatar plays an important role in the international community to that end. It is committed to providing support to developing countries that seek to improve livelihoods in their communities. The State of Qatar has provided voluntary development assistance to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries; development assistance at the governmental and non-governmental levels exceeded $2 billion in 2017. The African continent received the lion's share.

Under the wise leadership of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar and in solidarity with African nations, we continue to step up our efforts to

assist development projects in Africa and to support the infrastructure, education and health sectors.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine) Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Qatar Development Fund has provided developing countries in Africa with financial resources through relief and development projects, including support for 596,000 students to enrol in primary education. That reflects our firm belief in the fact that access to primary education for children is a driving force in human development. We also support infrastructure projects, such as those related to building roads, power generation and health care.

African States have the primary responsibility for their socioeconomic development. However, the support of the international community is needed to assist the efforts of those States. The commitments made by the international community in that respect should be honoured. The State of Qatar reiterates that it will remain committed to working in partnership with the international community in order to advance the sustainable development agenda, in particular NEPAD.

Ms. Blais (Canada): It is an honour for Canada to make this statement at today's debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Canada has actively participated, as a partner and a peer, in this week's Africa Dialogue Series. We very much appreciate the opportunity to listen to our friends and colleagues as we explore a stronger African Union and United Nations partnership for peace, security and development in Africa. Canada understands that we need to listen and learn in order to contribute to better outcomes. That is what we do, both at home and abroad and in this Hall today.

Canada commends the leadership of African countries, the African Union and the regional economic communities in efforts to advance regional integration and mainstream the priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. We should all support Africa as it works to create opportunities for its youth and to meet its ambitions. Africa will do that through greater economic integration, which will lead to prosperity.

During the General Assembly's high-level week, Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, was proud to partner with President Akufo-Addo of Ghana, President Kagame of Rwanda and Prime Minister May of the United Kingdom to lead a discussion on investing in decent jobs and opportunities for young people across Africa. Let me take a moment to acknowledge that the World Bank has just confirmed that Seychelles has made the most progress in achieving the development of human capital. It is an inspiration to all Africa that a small nation can make so much progress in only a short period of time. We also know that over the next 20 years, the world's 10 fastest growing cities will all be in Africa. To support that reality, we need to build essential infrastructure.

To help bridge the financial gap in order to make that happen, Prime Minister Trudeau announced the creation of an affiliate of the Global Infrastructure Hub in Toronto to leverage Canada's expertise in infrastructure so as to help connect capital to projects in Africa and beyond. Such projects fuel long-term economic growth and support the transition to a low-carbon economy, while making progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and improving the representation of women and marginalized groups in sustainable infrastructure. Aid alone is not enough. Economic growth also derives from high-quality education. That is why Canada led the Group of Seven (G-7) in raising $4 billion towards girls' education. The Prime Minister was very pleased to sit down with the Presidents of the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone and Zambia and the Foreign Minister of The Gambia at this year's session of the General Assembly to discuss the issue and to find out from them how the money can be disbursed and how we can work with them to achieve that common goal.

With respect to climate change, in a statement to the General Assembly to mark the opening of the Paris Agreement for signature in 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau said that developing countries should not be punished for a problem they did not create, nor should they be deprived of the opportunities for clean growth that developed nations are now pursuing.

Therefore, as part of our G-7 presidency this year, we felt strongly that we needed to tackle the issue of climate resilience and disaster recovery. We were honoured that the Presidents of Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa and Seychelles participated in that critical conversation.

Our oceans and coasts are under considerable threat. Resilient coastal communities and healthy oceans are

vital to growing economies that work for everyone, and that is why we are committed to working with others to protect the world's oceans. In that vein, Canada will partner with Kenya and Japan to host the first global conference on the sustainable blue economy this fall in Nairobi. We hope that all Members will join us.

Under the 2030 Agenda, we also collectively agreed to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria over the next 12 years. For that reason, Canada continues to support the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, an organization that works closely with sub-Saharan countries and disburses 65 per cent of its funding to eliminate those three diseases.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada believes in African leadership. In that regard, Canada joined the consensus to elect Louise Mushikiwabo of Rwanda to head the International Organization of la Francophonie. We congratulate her and look forward to working with her. With the Assembly's support, Canada, with French as one of its official languages, will be a voice for la Francophonie in the Security Council for the period from 2021 to 2022.

Canada is proud to continue its long history of contributing to international peace, security and stability, including through our deployments in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. As gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are key priorities for Canada, we have launched the Elsie Initiative, a pilot project to increase the meaningful participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Canada will establish bilateral technical assistance and training partnerships with the Ghana armed forces and the Zambia police force. We will also support the implementation of the gender-mainstreaming strategy in Senegal's armed forces.

Only together can we meet the great challenges of our time and, in particular, seize emerging opportunities. Whether it is creating economic growth for the benefit of all, combating climate change or building a more peaceful world, Canada is committed to working with African Member States to build a better future for us all.

Ms. Krisnamurthi (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his reports (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273) under this agenda item, which highlight the progress achieved in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and set forth practical recommendations.

My delegation is very pleased to see positive transformations taking place in Africa. African economies continue to gain momentum, following the upturn in the global economy. Overall, growth reached 3.6 per cent in 2017, exceeding the rate in other regions and marking a significant rebound from 2.2 per cent in 2016. The continent is also making strides in the implementation of the NEPAD priorities, particularly agriculture, infrastructure, education, gender mainstreaming and governance. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area in March is a welcome development, with the potential to promote intra-African trade and greater economic integration. While NEPAD embodies African countries' acceptance of responsibility for their own development, sustainable development in Africa cannot be achieved by the African countries alone. We all share the responsibility to ensure that African countries are not left behind.

The critical role of official development assistance and foreign direct investment cannot be overstated, and we call for the fulfilment of all the commitments of that kind made by development partners. Efforts must be made to provide debt relief for African countries. We must address Africa's disproportionately low share of international trade. Infrastructure development is imperative to facilitate trade and promote Africa's integration into the global economy. Equally critical is the continuous provision of capacity-building and policy advisory support.

Indonesia has always been a true partner for African countries. Such a partnership can be traced as far back as the 1955 Asian-African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia. We take pride in co-initiating with South Africa the New Asia Africa Strategic Partnership to promote cooperation between the two regions. With no less than 1,100 participants over the past decade, African countries continue to be

among the top recipients of Indonesia's South-South cooperation programme, which is based entirely on the principles of non-conditionality and demand-driven considerations. Early this year, Indonesia also hosted the first-ever Indonesia-Africa Forum to promote trade and investment cooperation. Suffice it to say that the Forum was a great success, resulting in business deals worth no less than $586 million. During the Forum, a series of meetings was also held to begin preferential trade agreement discussions with a number of African countries.

Building on that momentum, we will convene the Indonesia-Africa Infrastructure Dialogue in August 2019, which will address that issue of high priority to both Indonesia and Africa. Later this month, Indonesia will host the Indonesia-Africa Maritime Dialogue on the margins of the "Our Ocean" Conference to explore cooperation on sustainable fisheries and maritime security, including through the exchange of best practices and capacity-building.

There can be no sustainable development without peace. Indonesia is committed to supporting peace and stability in Africa, including through its participation in United Nations peacekeeping. No fewer than 1,388 Indonesian peacekeepers are currently deployed in seven United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa, and we are now in the process of deploying a 850-person strong rapid deployment brigade to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Allow me to conclude by commending African leaders for their excellent stewardship and unwavering commitment to the pursuit of durable peace and sustainable development. Indonesia stands ready to be part of the positive transformation of Africa.

Mr. Sinha (India): We align our statement with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We meet at a time when we are well under way on the journey towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted three years ago. In addition, our African partners have also commenced the first phase of the implementation of the African Union's mutually reinforcing, longer-term Agenda 2063. Africa has made rapid strides in recent years in every aspect. Compared with even a decade ago, the continent is more peaceful. Its governance institutions are stronger. Its overall economic output has grown. Poverty rates have fallen. Infrastructure and connectivity are improving, and the economies are more diversified. Life expectancy has increased. Infant and maternal mortality rates have fallen. Africa is a young continent. It is projected to account for nearly one fifth of the world's population by 2030, with a demographic dividend that can be of great advantage provided that young people have the education and the skills needed for economic opportunities.

Long-standing trade and diaspora links across the Indian Ocean, a shared colonial past and our common development challenges have framed India's relationship with Africa. Going forward, shared prosperity is the theme of our partnership. Our development partnership currently includes the implementation of 180 lines of credit, worth approximately $11 billion, in over 40 African countries. At the previous India-Africa Forum Summit, we committed a concessional line of credit of $10 billion and $600 million in grant assistance. Every year, more than 8,000 African young people are trained in a diverse set of programmes in India. As always, our efforts will be driven by African priorities. Indian companies have invested more than $54 billion in Africa.

Our trade with Africa now amounts to more than $62 billion. That is over 21 per cent more than in the previous year. Africa's exports to India are growing, and our economic ties are now increasingly driven by new partnerships of innovation in the digital economy. The Pan-African e-Network Project links 48 African countries to India and to one another. It can become the new backbone of digital innovation in Africa. Working with several African coastal nations, our partnership now seeks increasingly to harness the benefits of the blue economy in a sustainable manner. India's medicines have turned the tide on diseases that were once a threat to Africa's future. They also continue to make health care affordable and accessible to many. The International Solar Alliance, championed by India and France, has been joined by 70 nations, including 25 from Africa. The Alliance is making ambitious strides in contributing tangibly to global efforts to promote renewable energy and climate action.

Indian leaders continue to attach a very high priority to our partnership with Africa. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Modi paid an official visit to three countries of the continent. During the past four years, the top leadership of India, including the President, Vice-President and Prime Minister, have visited more

than 20 African countries. Indian ministers visited all 54 partner countries during that period. We have also had 32 incoming visits by African Heads of State and Government, in addition to the landmark third India-Africa Forum Summit, held in Delhi three years ago, in which all 54 African nations participated, including 41 African Heads of State and Government. India has also engaged with the Group of 20 and the BRICS group, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, on issues concerning Africa's development priorities.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that India's partnership with Africa is based on building instruments of empowerment for Africa. India stands together with Africa in its endeavours, while upholding the principle of equality. In a similar spirit, we look forward to the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

Last year, here at the United Nations, India established the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, stepping up its efforts to promote South-South cooperation. A sum of $150 million has been committed for the next decade, the focus of which will be development projects in least developed countries and small island developing States. In its first year, the Fund has already initiated projects in nine countries in Africa and will continue to enhance its outreach, which continues to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and stands true to the principle of leaving no one behind.

Ms. Khyne (Myanmar): Myanmar aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), which highlight the progress, impact and challenges of African countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, and provide recommendations on the way forward for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Myanmar highly values relations with countries in Africa. Myanmar was one of the leading countries that organized in 1955 the first Asia-Africa Conference, also known as the Bandung Conference, to cultivate greater friendship and cooperation between African and Asian countries. Myanmar also welcomed the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership, which seeks to rekindle the spirit of friendship and cooperation between the two continents. Given its long-standing friendship and relations with Africa, Myanmar attaches great importance to NEPAD and remains committed to its implementation aimed at achieving socioeconomic transformation and development in Africa.

Myanmar congratulates Africa on making great strides in the economic and social fields over the past years. We welcome the important progress towards the implementation of several key areas of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, particularly in infrastructure, agriculture and gender mainstreaming. Africa's gross domestic product growth rate rose to 3 per cent in 2017, as compared to 1.7 per cent in 2016, and concrete steps are being taken in the health and education sectors to advance progress in the social sphere. We appreciate the efforts made by our African friends, in their respective national development frameworks, in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, which has started to bear fruitful results. Myanmar welcomes the launch this year of the Single African Air Transport Market and the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Myanmar hopes that the creation of such intra-African trade will generate dynamic economic gains and a more resilient African economy.

Notwithstanding those positive developments, Africa still needs to overcome persistent and emerging challenges. The progress we have witnessed is clearly not enough. In order to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to achieve our common goal of sustainable development, the African countries and the international community need to intensify their collective efforts. I wish to highlight some points towards that end.

Adequate and predictable financing is indispensable for the successful implementation of those Agendas if no one is to be left behind. Financing remains a growing challenge, even though bilateral aid to Africa increased in 2017. Efforts therefore need to be made to increase official development assistance to African countries, in line with the pledges made. We need to foster a closer partnership between Africa and the

international community, including the United Nations system. Cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, technology transfer, debt relief and addressing illicit financial flows is crucial to supporting African countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We also need to promote South-South and triangular cooperation for the development of Africa, while complementing relations with its traditional development partners.

The United Nations system continues to play a pivotal role in realizing the priorities of the African Union and NEPAD at both the global and the regional levels by providing substantial support to programmes and projects for the inclusive and sustainable development of Africa. My delegation hopes that the repositioning of the United Nations development system will further enhance the capacities of African countries in their pursuit of sustainable development.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Myanmar's strong commitment to working closely with our African friends to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. I also wish to reaffirm our friendship and solidarity with Africa. Together, we will achieve a better future that leaves no one behind.

Mr. Stefanile (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/73/269) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which outlines the progress made by the African countries in the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report shows that African countries continue to make important advancements in implementing NEPAD's priorities, particularly in infrastructure, agriculture, education, gender mainstreaming and public governance. Among those positive developments, which we sincerely commend, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area stands out as a particularly significant achievement that could create momentum towards continental integration and help to achieve the African Union's vision of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa. At the same time, the Secretary-General's report analyses the challenges that must still be addressed, including the need to build sustainable partnerships with international actors.

Italy stands ready to work in that direction together with its African partners. Because of its history, geography and cultural traditions, Italy has always had a strong and profound relationship with Africa. Over the years, we have invested significant resources in the future of the continent, with an integrated approach encompassing humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and private investments. Our action has always been and remains inspired by the following principles: African ownership in defining development priorities, transparency and shared responsibility.

Our engagement has been consistent over the years and is being scaled up. In 2018, the resources allocated for Africa by the Italian Development Cooperation amount to €182 million — an increase of 11.6 per cent, as compared to last year. More generally, Italy is assisting with training and capacity-building programmes in many parts of Africa, from Libya to the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, in various areas identified in agreement with the local authorities and with full respect for the principle of African ownership. Italy's engagement is particularly strong in the Horn of Africa. Last week, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte visited Ethiopia and Eritrea in order to express concrete support for the normalization process being carried forward by the leaders in Addis Ababa and Asmara, which we are confident will also result in better development prospects for the two countries and the rest of the region.

The Sahel has also become a priority for us. Italy strongly supports the revitalization of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and is particularly pleased to see that the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel is moving forward. From a bilateral point of view, we have expanded our presence in the region through the opening of new embassies in Niamey, Conakry and, soon, Ouagadougou. Italy has also traditionally put African development at the forefront of its action in major multilateral forums. During our presidency of the Group of Seven in 2017, we focused on increasing collective support for food security and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa and dedicated the outreach session of the Group of Seven summit specifically to the African continent. In the framework of the Group of 20, we have been actively participating in the Compact with Africa, an initiative launched by the 2017 German presidency, which is aimed at promoting private investment in 11 African countries.

We believe in the need for a stronger involvement of the private sector in order for African development to be sustainable in the long term. Already one of the largest investors in Africa, Italy has increasingly been engaging its private sector in the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships in Africa, especially with a view to promoting greater and better access to sustainable energy.

I take the opportunity to highlight the fact that the second Italy-Africa Ministerial Conference — which represents a structured framework of the partnership established between Italy and Africa — will take place in Rome on 24 and 25 October. That high-level meeting, the second of which is now being held, will enable us to strengthen our dialogue and cooperation with Africa in many areas. It will focus on Africa's economic growth, our concerted efforts to foster peace on the continent, and the promotion of human-capital development. There will also be the opportunity to discuss how the Italian business model — based on small and medium-sized enterprises — can help in developing African entrepreneurship.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Italy's commitment to move forward its partnership with the African countries in pursuing the objectives set out in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda and in making further and steady progress in the implementation of the NEPAD priorities. Our long-term engagement alongside the African continent is and will remain a priority.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports under this agenda item (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273). I would like to associate my delegation with the statements delivered by the representatives of Morocco and Egypt on behalf of the Group of African States and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Since the beginning of this century, Africa has continued to see encouraging economic growth resulting in the reduction of poverty. However, the continent still faces multiple development challenges owing, inter alia, to the lack of structural economic transformation and regional integration. As a result, in 2015, African leaders endorsed Agenda 2063 with an unwavering political commitment to building an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent that plays its rightful role at the global level. The African Union's Agenda 2063 demonstrates the will and readiness of Africans to shape the destiny of the continent by forging partnerships with domestic and external partners.

In that regard, by mainstreaming Agenda 2063, particularly its first 10-year plan, into their development priorities, African countries have been implementing national, regional and continental development initiatives. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area is an important achievement that seeks, inter alia, to promote regional integration by increasing the value of intra-African trade. African countries, including Ethiopia, have also continued to mobilize domestic resources so as to finance their development programmes. Similarly, the implementation plans of the national, regional and continental strategies include actions to adapt to and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

While implementing Agenda 2063 is primarily the responsibility of African countries, we believe that, in an interconnected world where we have committed to revitalizing global partnerships through internationally agreed development frameworks, supporting Africa is the right thing to do in order to demonstrate global solidarity and cooperation in a practical way. In that connection, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report on NEPAD (A/73/269), we appreciate all our bilateral and multilateral development partners for their continued support for the implementation of Agenda 2063.

In that regard, we commend the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, which is aimed at coordinating the follow-up and reporting mechanisms of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. We also believe that the United Nations-African Union cooperation and coordination should be further consolidated so as to achieve both development frameworks in accordance with national and regional initiatives.

We underscore that Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda have been fashioned in a coherent manner so as to support Africa's sustainable development. Africa's efforts should therefore be supported by coordinated global actions so that the continent is not left behind. Africa remains the litmus test for the success of the international community in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Ethiopia remains committed to contributing to the realization of the vision of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in line with its development priorities.

Peace is an essential prerequisite for Africa's development. Much has been achieved by the continent as it works to strengthen the capacities for structural conflict prevention in Africa. The operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture represents notable progress towards further strengthening African-led efforts to prevent conflicts and to address their root causes. Africa is indeed driving its own agenda and rising to meet its peace challenges.

Significant advancements has been made with regard to regional cooperation and integration. The implementation of the African Union's master road map of practical steps for silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 is also under way. The role of the United Nations system, which is focused mainly on supporting peace and security and good governance and on initiatives and actions aimed at contributing to addressing the root causes of conflict on the continent, is also commendable. But one crucial matter is the collaboration at various levels between the United Nations and the African Union on the basis of comparative advantages in working towards a greater unity of purpose.

Member States have the primary responsibility for conflict prevention, and that prevention depends ultimately on their capacity to build resilience to violent conflicts, strengthen local capacities to build and sustain peace, and promote sustainable development. To that end, Ethiopia has opened a new chapter in its political and social history, offering realistic and genuine possibilities for change that will meet the hopes and expectations of our citizens and ensure that those changes are in line with the new political and democratic realities in the country, with the ultimate goal of creating a just, peaceful, equitable and sustainable society.

Another highly important and historic development is taking place in our subregion. A real process of normalization of relations between and among the countries of the Horn of Africa has been launched. In the light of those important and positive developments, it is appropriate and timely for the United Nations to seriously consider how to support and maintain those efforts.

Let me conclude by underlining that Ethiopia is, and will always remain, firmly committed to making every possible effort towards creating peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies in our subregion and on the African continent.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): The joint debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the General Assembly is, as we all know, very important to the continent, and my country cherishes this opportunity to share its views with the entire membership. The NEPAD Agency remains the technical arm of the African Union (AU), in coordination with the other structures of the Union and with regional economic communities.

I would like to start by saying that, in addition to aligning ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt and Morocco, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States, respectively, I would like to add the following remarks.

We note with deep appreciation most of the findings and recommendations contained in the three reports of the Secretary-General, namely, the latest report on NEPAD (A/73/269), the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/73/273), and the biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development (A/73/270).

I first wish to thank the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for the dedication and valuable work of Ms. Bience Gawanas and her team in enhancing international support for Africa's development. I also wish to commend the work of the Economic Commission for Africa in that regard and call for enhanced cooperation with the African Union on those and other issues.

Regarding the report entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: sixteenth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support", we consider its findings encouraging, as it shows the continued progress being made by African countries in the implementation of NEPAD's priorities, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, education, gender mainstreaming and governance.

With regard to the actions being taken by African countries and organizations, we agree that infrastructure is an enabler for the continent's industrialization and regional integration. It is a positive development that the NEPAD Agency is hosting the project on the implementation of the African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network, which aims to interconnect all African capitals. There are currently ideas to connect

South Africa with Algeria by rail — a project on which we have already made a start. It is now almost possible to drive from Algiers to Lagos as a result of the Trans-Sahara Highway project, which aims to connect more than 400 million people spread across 6 million square kilometres. Health issues are also crucial, and we welcome the fact that 12 of the 55 member States of the African Union have reviewed, or are in the process of reviewing, their domestic laws on the regulation of medicines, in line with the African Union's model law. We hope that more countries will undertake that alignment process in the coming years.

We strongly appreciate the fact that the NEPAD Agency continues to support the efforts of African countries to achieve gender parity in education and the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment at the national, regional and subregional levels. Algeria is among the leaders of its region on that issue. As for the response of the international community, I note with some concern that data on official development assistance to Africa in 2017 was not available at the time of reporting. Let me insist on the importance of having that data in the next NEPAD reports. The available data on Africa in the report shows a 1.3 per cent decrease in official development assistance in 2016. We hope that the most recent data will be more positive.

We agree that, in the light of the persistent imbalances in African labour markets and the high youth unemployment, African countries must take measures to equip students with the requisite skills and training needed for today's labour markets. Youth employment is an important component of preventing conflicts.

That brings me to the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. That report indicates that the past two decades have witnessed remarkable progress and the emergence of a new African narrative in all areas. Africa is driving its own agenda in rising to meet the challenges it faces with regard to peace and development, and we believe that that achievement is certainly the result of the African Union's outstanding efforts. The United Nations and development partners have also contributed to that success.

We note with appreciation that the Peacebuilding Fund has provided seed funding for some components of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (2018-2022). We would be very interested in having in the next report information on what the United Nations and development partners are doing to support the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process. We invite the Secretary-General to shed light on that aspect in his next report. We concur that conflict prevention is ultimately about the capability of Member States to build resilience to violent conflicts. The United Nations, the AU and the regional economic communities, along with their respective mechanisms, play a tremendous role in the efforts to develop comprehensive and coherent conflict-prevention strategies and tools of countries in that regard.

It is imperative for the AU, NEPAD, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Development Bank and the regional economic communities to enhance their work on conflict prevention. The newly established United Nations-AU annual conference, the desk-to-desk consultations, the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations interdepartmental task force on African affairs provide useful platforms for improving consultations, information exchange and joint planning in our efforts to foster coordinated support for Africa's peace and development priorities.

Regarding the third report, which deals with impacts and challenges in four thematic areas that are critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, namely, industrialization and regional integration, health, water and sanitation, climate change and financing for sustainable development, I would first like to commend Africa's traditional, new and emerging development partners. We agree with almost all the conclusions and recommendations in the report. However, regarding the health, water and sanitation recommendations to development partners, we wonder why the scaling-up of long-term, predictable and sustainable health financing is limited only to South-South cooperation. We believe that that should be broadened to all forms of international cooperation. On financing for development, we echo the need for development partners to increase official development assistance to Africa, in line with the scale of the challenges facing the continent.

Thanks to its immense potential in both human and natural resources, Africa is the future of the world. Africa is a thriving continent that is on the right track, despite real and evident setbacks and uncertainties.

Africa now needs to jump-start its development, and it has started to do that thanks to many national, regional and continental endeavours. Africa needs to be respected and viewed as a partner, not as a source of problems or a threat to others. History shows that the whole world still has an obligation towards the continent to work to repair its problems. Cooperation, mutual respect, genuine partnership and solidarity are needed more than ever.

Ms. Skåre (Norway): There are many reasons to be optimistic about the future of Africa. Good progress has been made in achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU). The African Continental Free Trade Area holds promise for stimulating continued and inclusive growth. Serious challenges remain, however, and here I wish to underscore the importance of job creation, particularly for women and young people.

We must step up our support for those in the greatest need, and in order to achieve our common goals we need to intensify our cooperation with our partners in Africa. Regional and subregional organizations play a crucial role in helping us to find sustainable solutions for our shared future. On 1 October, Norway opened its Permanent Mission to the African Union in Addis Ababa. Norway is honoured to support the AU-led training for incoming African members of the Security Council and the AU office in New York. We see ourselves as a consistent and reliable partner. For more than 10 years, Norway has allocated 1 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance. Development assistance continues to be an important component of our cooperation with countries in Africa. However, trade, private investments and business cooperation have now become increasingly prominent parts of our partnerships, which is a very promising and inspiring trend.

We share with Africa the challenges posed by illicit financial flows, and we commend the good work done in that regard in Africa. We particularly commend Nigeria for the leading role it has taken in the fight against illicit financial flows, and we are proud to be partners in that important work. We share the priority of ensuring gender equality. Women's participation in all sectors of society benefits our economies and societies. Allow me to especially congratulate Ethiopia on the gender parity in its new Government. That country is leading the way.

In his twentieth annual report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/73/273), the Secretary-General advocates the strengthening of capacities for structural conflict prevention. We align ourselves with that important message, and we welcome the notable progress on the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Norway stands ready to contribute to the prevention of conflicts and to addressing their root causes. Through our partnerships, Norway will continue to contribute to good solutions for our common future.

Mr. Arrocha Ruiz (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama welcomes this debate, which constitutes a significant effort to stimulate effective dialogue on global cooperation for the development of the African continent — a topic that demands the commitment of us all. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would like particularly to emphasize the value of the reports of the Secretary-General (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), which put into perspective the progress made by African countries in fulfilling their priorities within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — a strategy that seeks to tackle the great challenges of the region and enable the full-fledged sustainable development of its population. We have set ourselves the challenge of leaving no one behind. Achieving that requires innovative and mutually responsible leadership in order to ensure that such well-being is enjoyed by all, fairly and without discrimination, aimed at attaining more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Panama recognizes the significance of the existing link between the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We congratulate the efforts of African countries to include the priorities of both Agendas in their national development frameworks in a coordinated way. We also commend the progress made in terms of integration through the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area, the accomplishment of which also marks the ideal way to attain an integrated, peaceful and prosperous region.

The challenges that Africa continues to face are not insignificant, namely, the need to overcome armed conflicts, consolidate peace processes and

address issues of human rights, health and education, among others. However, we are confident of Africa's potential to drive its own development so as to ensure a safe, prosperous and peaceful continent with strong institutions. We also trust that the Africa Dialogue Series, held in recent days, yielded valuable results in strengthening the strategic alliance that must be maintained between the United Nations and the African Union. There is no doubt that the role played by regional institutions provides a platform of unique importance in ensuring the success of the development agenda.

Throughout the current decade, Africa has striven to maximize the results of its regional agenda, which is laudable. We welcome the third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, as well as its efforts to achieve the rollback of malaria and to increase agricultural productivity and food security. In addition, in 2010, Africa marked the beginning of the African Women's Decade, and we have seen an increase in the participation of women in leadership roles — such as Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Graça Machel, to name only two. We therefore commend all efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. My country firmly believes that the participation of women is a fundamental element in attaining the full development and progress of any country.

There is no doubt that the international community should support, and must continue to support, African countries in the socioeconomic transformation of their continent. To that end, cooperation among States and through multisectoral partnerships that address strategic areas prioritized by Africans is vital and mandatory. My country firmly believes in the strong ties between development and security, stressing that there can be no development without peace, nor peace without development. The responsibility of this Organization, and the Security Council in particular, should be to serve as the fulcrum in the prevention of conflicts. For that reason, we commend the efforts of African countries to promote and foster constructive dialogue mechanisms with all segments of society. We urge those countries to continue their work in the area of conflict prevention and to implement initiatives aimed at preventing conflicts at all stages by tackling their root causes in a timely manner.

Mindful of the fact that the construction of a peaceful and safe world is a shared global responsibility, Panama has been expanding and strengthening its relations with other regions of the world, and, as part of our foreign policy priorities, we have launched the so-called Falcon Policy, through which we seek to further strengthen our political ties of friendship, fraternity and cooperation with Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In that regard and as a middle-income country offering cooperation, we make ourselves available to African countries to serve as a resource for the exchange of knowledge and good practices, abiding by the criterion of solidarity and with a view to contributing to the achievement of our shared development goals.

I would like to conclude by remembering two sons of Africa and citizens of the world, namely, Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan, who both dreamt of an African continent in peace and with full-fledged development. I reiterate Panama's support and solidarity in contributing to the full and effective implementation of the commitments made for the development of Africa and its people.

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his important reports before us (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), as well as the substantial recommendations therein.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the Kingdom of Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I would like to add the following points in my national capacity.

We note that the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/269) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) includes the positive developments that have taken place during the reporting period. Among the most important of those developments are the inauguration in March of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the continent's economic growth rate of 3.6 per cent in 2017, as well as the enhanced cooperation among African States to implement NEPAD, particularly in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, gender mainstreaming, the environment and climate change, information and communications technology, education and training, among other important fields.

In that regard, we recall the many developments related to achieving the purposes and objectives of NEPAD, most importantly the recent positive developments in the Horn of Africa and the

normalization of relations among the countries of the region, as well as the revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The Agreement was signed in Addis Ababa on 12 September by the parties to the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, thanks to the efforts of the Sudan in the context of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development initiative for peace in South Sudan. The relevant stakeholders have begun the necessary preparations to implement the Agreement.

With regard to the Central African Republic, efforts are currently under way to hold a new round of negotiations among the relevant parties in Khartoum in November, following the negotiations that took place in August, all within the framework of the African Union (AU) initiative for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic. All those efforts are being made in the broader context of the AU initiative to silence the guns across Africa by 2020. That would enable African countries to dedicate their financial and human resources to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, to which we aspire.

We note the important information contained in the Secretary-General's report on NEPAD to the effect that the African continent is in need of $130 billion to $170 billion annually for investment in infrastructure projects. However, the current projects represent just 5 per cent of Africa's overall investment needs, which should prompt us to step up international and regional efforts to address that large gap in order to ensure that no one is left behind in terms of development.

We also note that, despite the significant economic growth rate realized in Africa, which in the report of the Secretary-General is estimated to be approximately 3.6 per cent in 2017, Africa continues to face multiple challenges, including poverty, youth unemployment, income disparity among African communities, climate change, debt burden and population growth. That array of challenges is hampering the development of the continent.

We would like to recall the importance of supporting the efforts of the AU and regional economic communities to achieve economic integration on the continent, strengthen commercial trade and investment among African States, and strengthen the role of the AU in achieving peace and security in Africa, in the context of attaining African solutions to the continent's problems. In that regard, we commend the AU initiative to establish a fund for supporting peace and security, which aims to provide 25 per cent of the budgets for African peacekeeping operations.

We stress the importance of enhancing African ownership and leadership of the efforts to address the challenges facing the continent. It is also important to strengthen coordination between the AU and other partners, States and organizations, as well as to promote partnership between the AU and the private sector, civil society, academics, the media and Africans in diaspora, who, as a group, constitute the fifth region of the African continent. We also support the reforms undertaken by the AU, as well as the partnership between the AU and the United Nations in the areas of peace, security and development. We call for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and for investing in conflict resolution in Africa. It is important to strengthen coordination between the United Nations and its agencies that work on the continent, while seeking to promote capacity-building, technology transfer and the exchange of experiences and best development practices.

To conclude, my delegation underlines that the international community has significant vital interests in Africa, and that supporting the continent's efforts to achieve sustainable development and fulfil the 2030 Agenda would reap benefits for all. We stress partnerships for the future, which would benefit everyone in the areas of investments, trade exchange, achieving peace and security, fighting terrorism, combating drugs, terrorism and illicit migration, transnational crime, sustainable environment and other crucial areas. We all can accomplish those noble goals if we work, cooperate and coordinate together according to a clear vision.

Mr. Hoshino (Japan): There is no denying that Japan finds itself geographically far from the African continent. However, in today's globalized world, irrespective of our location, we share common challenges, common successes and a common future. Therefore, Africa's peace and prosperity are our peace and prosperity, and our peace and prosperity are those of Africa. In that spirit, in 1993, the Government of Japan launched the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).

TICAD is a process realized through the active participation of African countries, as well as a strong partnership with the United Nations, represented by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Development Programme, the African Union Commission and the World Bank. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for that strong partnership, without which TICAD could not succeed.

Inclusiveness, a focus on Africa's ownership and strong follow-up mechanisms to ensure the concrete implementation of commitments are the three notable features of TICAD. The TICAD process is also aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063 through its focus on the peace, development and humanitarian nexus, as well as its people-centred and human security approach. We believe that TICAD makes significant contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

At the latest TICAD ministerial meeting held in Tokyo earlier this month, it was agreed that international support should comply with international standards, taking into account the sustainability of the debt of the recipient countries. That echoes a point contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: sixteenth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support" (A/73/269). In addition, the participants agreed on the need for private investment in order to diversify Africa's economies, in particular its industries, and to develop high-quality infrastructure. They also agreed on the importance of realizing universal health coverage. Based on the outcomes of the TICAD ministerial meeting, Japan intends to accelerate its preparations to host the next TICAD summit, known as TICAD VII, which will take place in August next year. I urge delegations to mark their calendars.

This week, we appreciated the launch of the Africa Dialogue Series 2018 as an opportunity to deepen discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and on operationalizing the frameworks for partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union. It has also provided us with invaluable inspiration for TICAD VII.

We look forward to further consolidating our partnerships with African countries, international and subregional organizations and all other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, in order realize the Africa we want, which is a necessary component of the world we all want.

Mrs. Pobee (Ghana): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for the excellent reports he has submitted under this agenda item (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273), and commends the Special Adviser on Africa and her team for the successful launch of the Africa Dialogue Series and for facilitating the rich exchange of views on the critical issues of concern to Africa over the past two days.

Ghana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Morocco and Egypt on behalf of the Group of African States and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Africa's development priorities have been clearly expressed in several continental and global landmark agreements, the most significant being Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, a strategic vision for transformative development in Africa, and the 10-year implementation plan (2014-2023), which hold the promise of contributing to the enhancement of inclusive economic and social progress. The emphasis of Agenda 2063 on agriculture development, infrastructure development and industrialization will greatly facilitate job creation and poverty eradication on the continent.

Equally transformative is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which derives many of its goals and targets from the African Union's Agenda 2063 and which, together with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, provides a comprehensive framework for action in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity.

My delegation is particularly pleased that, in the past year, the African Union has concluded several major continental agreements, including the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, the Single African Air Transport Market and the continent-wide protocol on the free movement of people, all of which are important pillars of Agenda 2063 and a sign of the collective resolve and determination of Africans to create the conditions necessary for the realization of the continental vision of socioeconomic transformation.

Africa has demonstrated leadership in the development of the continent and is charting the continent's path to prosperity. The sense of enterprise,

creativity, innovation and hard work needed to engineer such a transition are already at work, and what is required is coherence and complementarity among global, continental, regional, national and local efforts for effective implementation.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the renewed efforts of the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to strengthen national and regional capacities to coordinate the implementation of the Agendas. We also wish to underscore the important work of the African Peer Review Mechanism in fostering good governance as an enabler of growth and sustainable development.

The African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in January, is a significant development. Similarly, the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security will promote sustaining peace as an important prerequisite for sustainable development. We urge continued collaboration on the implementation of strategies and programmes that promote the comprehensive development of Africa.

As rightly indicated in the Secretary-General's report on NEPAD, global economic conditions have a considerable bearing on the performance of African economies and, consequently, on the pace of progress in the implementation of the Agendas. Building resilience will be necessary in order to sustain our efforts.

Financing is a critical element for the achievement of development. As African countries redouble their efforts to mobilize domestic resources, we call on partners to fulfil their official development assistance commitments to complement those efforts. We also call for urgent international action to help curb illicit financial flows from Africa.

We take note that, as foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa have continued their downward trend, Africa's new and emerging development partners have made significant commitments in terms of FDI and other support, ranging from trade in natural resources to agriculture and construction. We welcome those partnerships, together with the launch of the Group of 20 Africa Partnership in July 2017, and hope that cooperation with the continent will be strengthened, with Agenda 2063 as its guiding framework. While commending our partners for those tangible contributions, we reaffirm the importance of the role of the private sector, as well as that of public-private partnerships, in meeting the challenges of sustainable development.

Both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063 recognize the importance of peace and stability, not only as critical enablers but also as important components of sustainable development. In line with that aspiration, Africa has also continued, with the support of the United Nations and development partners, to deal with current conflicts and to address emerging challenges to peace, security and development, such as the rise of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the growing number of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

We reaffirm that sustaining peace is a particularly poignant goal in Africa, and the mutually reinforcing and interlinked pillars of peace, security, development and human rights must be reinforced in order to find lasting solutions to conflicts on the African continent. Tackling the root causes of conflict, such as youth unemployment, inequality and economic and social exclusion, including through the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, will be critical to Africa's transformation.

The role of women in sustainable development cannot be overestimated. Equally important is their indispensable role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. For that reason, Ghana welcomes the collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union aimed at enhancing women's political leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding through the support given to the African Women Leaders Network.

Deliberate and targeted policies must be adopted by Governments with the goal of seeking ways to promote the inclusive participation of young people in development. The continent is a youthful one. That makes it imperative to include young people in Africa's efforts in a meaningful way, if we mean to achieve the goals and targets of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by associating myself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the three reports (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273) submitted under this agenda item. In those reports, the Secretary-General presents all the activities carried out by African countries, their development partners and the United Nations system. He also focuses on conflicts and the need for peace.

We commend all those contributions, and we thank Africa's bilateral and multilateral partners for their much-appreciated efforts. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, owing to problems with coordination, project finalization, resource mobilization and withdrawal, those efforts have not always produced the expected results. We must therefore redouble our efforts in a number of key areas in the future. That is why we endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations, which highlight a fitting vision for sustainable progress in Africa, with a focus on the following areas: sustainable and inclusive economic growth based on industry, trade and regional integration; the development of infrastructure; investment in human capital through measures in the fields of health care, science, technology and innovation, social development, employment, job creation, social protection, migration and mobility; action to promote women, gender equality and youth empowerment; humanitarian issues and disaster risk management; the environment, urbanization and population; and, lastly, advocacy, information, communication and culture.

Having embraced those strategic guidelines and despite an unfavourable economic situation, the Government of my country, through its strategic document for growth and employment, continues to create favourable conditions so that it can achieve the desired goals in each of those areas. We have therefore focused on entrepreneurship and the transformation of the informal sector, which provide niches for the empowerment of women and young people, with a view to fully integrating those groups into society.

A bank for small and medium-sized enterprises has been established. Further measures involve the efficient use of domestic resources through bonds, an approach that generates domestic savings to finance growth-generating projects. An investment-friendly code and framework conducive to a transparent, stable and predictable business climate are in place in order to attract foreign direct investment, which is seen as one of the cornerstones of strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Cameroon's health system has been considerably strengthened, and the transition to universal health coverage is well under way.

In recent years and in accordance with the Malabo Declaration on Nutrition Security for Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa, the Government of Cameroon has committed to achieving the goal of food security and nutrition. However, my delegation regrets to note that that objective is seriously threatened by desertification, drought, the terrorism of the Boko Haram sect and instability in the subregion, which requires an economically and socially burdensome management of refugees.

With regard to the multilateral and comprehensive approach to addressing common challenges, I would like to point out that Cameroon is actively participating in the promotion and strengthening of trade and regional integration through numerous bodies, such as the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Niger Basin Authority and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. It has joined the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, which seeks to increase commercial trade in Africa. It participates in the implementation of numerous local and regional infrastructures that seek to strengthen regional and continental integration, such as a project — now well under way — to build a railway linking the capital of Chad to the Cameroonian ports of Douala and Kribi. Those projects, currently at an advanced stage, are expected to increase trade among the countries of the subregion. Much of the road infrastructure linking the Cameroonian capital to the capitals or large cities of neighbouring countries, which is either operational or in the process of becoming so, will considerably boost subregional integration.

Cameroon is concerned about the increasing burden of African debt and the downward trend in official development assistance. In that context, we can barely implement the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. My country therefore calls on the international community to strengthen the capacities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and to respect fair and equitable rules so that African countries can access international trade and the technologies needed for sustainable development.

We cannot emphasize enough that conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as post-conflict peacebuilding, are crucial for the achievement

of NEPAD's objectives with regard to development. Let us therefore address the root causes of conflict in Africa in order to enable the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission to fully support African countries emerging from conflict. There is a saying in Africa that where peace is absent, destitution takes root, and where there is destitution, endless quarrels arise. There is therefore a cycle linking peace and development. In other words, while we certainly cannot eat peace, we also cannot eat when there is no peace. As such, substantial resources should be made available to the Secretary-General for those purposes.

It has been 16 years since Africa presented the New Partnership for Africa's Development to the world. The international community embraced that new partnership with enthusiasm. It is on that basis that our continent built the new initiative for the development of our continent by 2063 — which was endorsed by the Assembly — along with its programmes for the first 10 years. It is therefore clear that Africa knows what it wants, that it knows where it is going and that we know what must be done. We therefore call on all parties to respect their commitments.

The United Nations, for its part, must strengthen the coordination of its agencies responsible for implementing the Organization's contributions to that programme. In particular, they must strengthen the capacities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, as well as those of the Economic Commission for Africa and its subregional structures, which play an important role in coordinating, planning — including strategic planning — and programming, as well as in mobilizing resources and international opinion in support of Africa.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would also like to make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports portraying the development scenario in Africa (A/73/269, A/73/270 and A/73/273). While they generate optimism regarding the overall rebound of the African economy in 2017, one cannot miss their words of caution regarding Africa's persistent development challenges, for example, debt servicing, structural impediments, factors causing environmental stress such as desertification, job creation and the investment deficit, among others. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, must pay due attention to those areas.

As Chair of the Group of Least Developed Countries for the past three years, we have been particularly conscious of the interests of the African least developed countries. We have tried to highlight the specific challenges that they face, such as in the sectors of structural transformation, information and communications technology infrastructure, social and health issues, resilience-building and crisis management and mitigation, inter alia. We have also pressed for tailored support for the conflict-ridden countries in Africa. Our efforts to establish the Technology Bank are expected to go a long way towards addressing the technological requirements of and gaps facing the African least developed countries.

Bangladesh fully appreciates Africa's emerging potential to transform the world's political and socioeconomic landscape. The growing role and contribution of African countries to the global trade and economy is also gratifying. We endorse the African Union's Agenda 2063 and would be happy to contribute to the Agenda in any way we can. Since many of our development challenges are similar to those of African countries, we can complement each other by sharing our development experiences and best practices. Bangladesh can help to realize the full potential of the demographic dividend arising on the African continent with its huge young population. Here at the United Nations, we have consistently supported resolutions on Africa.

In the negotiations leading to the global compact for safe, regular and orderly migration, Bangladesh is one of the co-Chairs of the Friends of Migration Group, coordinating closely with the Group of African States, as our positions are often convergent. The same is true for many issues related to climate change. As one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, Bangladesh realizes the challenges facing many African countries and can contribute to building resilience and to disaster-risk reduction efforts.

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation is a good platform for Africa's development. We will continue to work with the Office to cooperate further to that end.

As one of the leading troop- and police-contributing countries with extensive experience in peacekeeping,

particularly in Africa, Bangladesh will continue to contribute to improving Africa's peace and security situation. Our peacekeepers have shed blood for their African brothers in the cause of peace. In almost all of the African countries where our peacekeepers have been deployed, they were able to leave a deep and positive mark on the society through their dedicated service and efforts. After all, peacekeeping is not only about the enforcement of peace but also about winning the hearts and minds of the host population.

On the bilateral front, despite our geographical remoteness, we are continuously expanding our diplomatic outreach to the African continent. In 2016 alone, we opened as many as three full-fledged diplomatic missions in Africa, including one in Addis Ababa, in order to increase our engagement with the African Union. Our teachers, doctors, engineers and other professionals contribute to the socioeconomic development of many African countries. There is a huge opportunity for investment cooperation in health, agriculture, particularly contract farming, and education-related areas within a win-win framework.

We are sharing our success in e-governance with African countries. In Somalia, for example, we are working on innovation in the delivery of public services and in Ethiopia, on the role that information and communications technology can play in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are also in talks with some other African countries. Those are replicable examples of South-South cooperation. A number of our non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the Bangladesh Rural Advancment Committee, one of the largest anti-poverty NGOs in the world, are working in many African countries in public health and socioeconomic improvement programmes, using our home-grown approach.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in combating malaria. We have seen a reduction of more than 50 per cent in the number of malaria cases and 54 per cent in related deaths since 2010. However, many people are still at risk of the disease. We have therefore revised our strategy so as to ensure alignment with the World Health Organization's Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030. That will also greatly contribute towards overall national development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG target 3.3 on ending the malaria epidemic. We are happy to share our experiences and best practices with Africa in terms of capacity-building and the prevention and management of malaria. We hope that a strong, well-organized multi-stakeholder partnership can help to deliver broad health benefits to African countries, including the reduction of malaria in sub-Saharan and other parts of Africa.

We look forward to the continued strengthening of our partnership with Africa. We also join the international community in its efforts to ensure and promote peace, security and sustainable development in Africa. We must bear in mind that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will remain elusive without Africa's development.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 68 and its sub-items (a) and (b), and agenda item 13.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/73/PV.24

General Assembly

Seventy-third session

Official Records

24th plenary meeting
Thursday, 25 October 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kornelíou (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 76

Report of the International Court of Justice

Report of the International Court of Justice (A/73/4)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/319)

The Acting President: I will now make a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

"First, I would like to congratulate the International Court of Justice on the election of new judges, including the President and Vice-President of the Court. Seventy-three years after its founding, the Court, a hallmark component of the Charter of the United Nations, remains as relevant as ever.

"In the face of the headwinds against the multilateral system and global institutions, including direct attacks on their legitimacy, the International Court of Justice stands as a testament to the principles of peace and justice in a multilateral world. Today's debate builds on 50 years of exchange between the Court and the General Assembly, allowing Member States the opportunity to debate the work of the Court. That historic exchange is particularly pertinent to the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, which aims to make the United Nations relevant to all. The Court system serves as a bulwark against arbitrariness and provides a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes, guaranteeing the stability so necessary for international cooperation. For the peoples of the world, the Court may be far away, but its impact is real.

"I am encouraged by the continued and enhanced confidence in the International Court of Justice. Not only has the Court's workload increased over the past 20 years, but that trend has continued into the period under review, demonstrating unequivocally that there remains a need and a desire for a multilateral mechanism to address legal challenges of international concern. The variety of cases addressed by the Court and the fact that those cases stem from four continents are also testament to the universality of the Court. In fact, as of today, a total of 73 Member States have accepted as compulsory the jurisdiction of the Court.

"In addition to the Court's role in advancing multilateralism, its judgments and advisory opinions directly influence the development and strengthening of the rule of law in countries the world over. As stated in the report of the Court:

> 'Everything the Court does is aimed at promoting and reinforcing the rule of law; through its judgments and advisory opinions, it contributes to developing and clarifying international law.' ***(A/73/4, para. 16)***

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

"Finally, at a time when human rights abuses and conflicts devastate the lives of millions and when tensions simmer in regions throughout the world, the adjudication of disputes between States remains an essential role of the Court in preserving peace and security. We welcome the Court's continued readiness to intervene when other diplomatic or political means have proved unsuccessful. For Member States, respect for the decisions, judgments, advice and orders of the Court remains critical to the efficacy and longevity of the international justice system. The General Assembly has therefore called on States that have not yet done so to consider accepting the jurisdiction of the Court, in accordance with its statute.

"In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that if we are to preserve the international multilateral system, adherence to and respect for international law remain key. I thank the Court for sharing its report and wish the Assembly a successful debate."

It is now my honour to invite Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, to take the floor.

Judge Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice: It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly for the first time since my election as President in February on the occasion of its consideration of the annual report of the International Court of Justice (A/73/4). The Court greatly values this time-honoured tradition, which enables us to present a succinct overview of the Court's judicial activities on a regular basis.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to do so at an Assembly meeting under the presidency of Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés. I congratulate her on her election to the presidency of the Assembly at its seventy-third session and wish her every success in her post.

Between 1 August 2017 — the starting date of the period covered by the Court's report — and today, the docket of the Court has remained extremely full, with 17 contentious cases and one advisory proceeding currently pending before it, a number of other cases having been decided in the course of the year. Indeed, it has been a particularly busy and productive period.

During that time, the Court has held hearings in six cases. The Court first heard the oral arguments of the parties on the preliminary objections submitted by France in the case concerning *Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France)*. It then held hearings on the merits in the case concerning *Obligation to Negotiate Access to the Pacific Ocean (Bolivia v. Chile)*. In June and August, the Court heard the oral arguments of the parties on two requests for the indication of provisional measures submitted, in turn, in the case concerning *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Qatar v. United Arab Emirates)* and in the case concerning *Alleged Violations of the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)*. In September, the Court heard the oral statements of the participants in the proceedings on the request for an advisory opinion submitted by the General Assembly in respect of the *Legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965*. Finally, a few weeks ago, it held hearings on the preliminary objections submitted by the United States of America in the case concerning *Certain Iranian Assets (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)*.

Since 1 August 2017, the Court has also delivered four judgments. On 2 February, the Court rendered two judgments on the merits, the first one on the question of the compensation owed in the case concerning *Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*, and the second one in the joined cases concerning *Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)* and *Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*.

On 6 June 2018, the Court rendered its judgment on the preliminary objections in the case concerning *Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France)*, and on 1 October 2018, it gave its ruling in the case concerning *Obligation to Negotiate Access to the Pacific Ocean (Bolivia v. Chile)*.

In addition, the Court issued 17 orders, including an order on the admissibility of counterclaims in the case concerning *Alleged Violations of Sovereign Rights and Maritime Spaces in the Caribbean Sea (Nicaragua v. Colombia)* and two orders indicating provisional measures: first, in the aforementioned case instituted by Qatar against the United Arab Emirates; and secondly, in the recently instituted case between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America concerning alleged violations of the bilateral

Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights of 1955.

As is customary, I shall now give a brief analysis of the substance of those decisions.

I begin by recalling certain elements of the judgments rendered in the cases opposing Costa Rica and Nicaragua. On 2 February, the Court rendered its judgment on the question of compensation in the case concerning *Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*. In particular, the Court was called upon to determine the amount of compensation to be awarded to Costa Rica for material damage caused by Nicaragua's unlawful activities on Costa Rican territory, as established in the Court's judgment of 16 December 2015. In that connection, it is recalled that Costa Rica had claimed compensation for two categories of damage: first, quantifiable environmental damage caused by Nicaragua's excavation of two channels (*caños*) on its territory in 2010 and 2013, and, secondly, costs and expenses incurred as a result of Nicaragua's unlawful activities.

With respect to environmental damage, the Court indicated that compensation could include indemnification for the impairment or loss of environmental goods and services and payment for the restoration of the damaged environment when natural recovery might not suffice to return an environment to the state in which it was before the change occurred. The Court found in particular that, in excavating the two *caños*, Nicaragua had removed many trees and cleared vegetation and that those activities had significantly affected the ability of the two impacted areas to provide certain environmental goods and services — namely, trees, other raw materials (fibre and energy), gas regulation and air quality services, as well as biodiversity. The Court stated that it was appropriate to approach the valuation of environmental damage from the perspective of the ecosystem as a whole, and it awarded Costa Rica the sum of $120,000 for the impairment or loss of the environmental goods and services of the impacted area in the period prior to recovery. The Court also considered that the payment of compensation for some restoration measures in respect of the wetland was justified, and it awarded Costa Rica the sum of $2,708.39 for that purpose.

The Court then dealt with Costa Rica's claims for costs and expenses incurred as a result of Nicaragua's unlawful activities in the northern part of Isla Portillos, ruling that some of those costs and expenses had a sufficiently direct and certain causal nexus with the wrongful conduct of Nicaragua. In particular, the Court considered that part of the costs and expenses incurred by Costa Rica in monitoring that area, and in preventing irreparable prejudice to the environment, including costs relating to the construction in 2015 of a dyke across one of the *caños*, was compensable. Thus, the Court awarded Costa Rica a total of $236,032.16 under that heading.

Turning to Costa Rica's claim for interest, the Court held that Costa Rica was not entitled to prejudgment interest on the amount of compensation for environmental damage since the Court had already taken full account of the impairment or loss of environmental goods and services in the period prior to recovery. Costa Rica was, however, awarded prejudgment interest on the costs and expenses found compensable, in the sum of $20,150.04. The Court further decided that, in the event of any delay in payment, post-judgment interest would accrue on the principal sum; that interest would be paid at an annual rate of 6 per cent.

The total amount of compensation awarded to Costa Rica was thus $378,890.59 to be paid by Nicaragua by 2 April 2018. Following that judgment, Nicaragua, by a letter dated 22 March 2018, informed the Court that it had transferred to Costa Rica the total amount of compensation awarded.

On 2 February, the Court handed down a second judgment on the merits in the joined cases concerning *Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)* and *Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*. I recall that the proceedings in the case concerning *Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)* were brought by an application of Costa Rica on 25 February 2014. The proceedings in the case concerning *Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)* were brought by an application of Costa Rica on 16 January 2017. The two cases were joined by an order of the Court handed down on 2 February 2017.

The Court observed in its judgment that the case concerning *Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)* raised issues of territorial sovereignty that were expedient to

examine first because of their possible implications for the maritime delimitation in the Caribbean Sea. The Court first held that the question of sovereignty over the coast of the northern part of Isla Portillos on the Caribbean Sea had not been decided in its judgment rendered on 16 December 2015. It then recalled that, according to its interpretation of the Treaty of Limits between Costa Rica and Nicaragua of 15 April 1858, in the 2015 judgment:

> "the territory under Costa Rica's sovereignty extends to the right bank of the Lower San Juan River as far as its mouth in the Caribbean Sea".

Noting that the report submitted to it by Court-appointed experts had dispelled all uncertainty about the geography of the area, the Court found that Costa Rica had sovereignty over the whole of Isla Portillos, with the exception of Harbor Head Lagoon and the sandbar separating it from the Caribbean Sea. The latter features were found to be under the sovereignty of Nicaragua.

The Court then held that, by establishing and maintaining a military camp on the beach of Isla Portillos, Nicaragua had violated Costa Rica's territorial sovereignty as defined in the judgment, and ruled that the camp had to be removed from Costa Rica's territory. The Court considered that the declaration of a violation of Costa Rica's sovereignty and the order addressed to Nicaragua to remove its camp from Costa Rica's territory constituted appropriate reparation.

The Court next turned to the case concerning *Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*, beginning with the delimitation in the Caribbean Sea. With respect to the starting point for the delimitation, the Court considered it preferable, due to the great instability of the coastline in the area, to select a fixed point at sea — 2 nautical miles from the coast on the median line — and connect it by a mobile line to a point on solid land on Coast Rica's coast that was closest to the mouth of the San Juan River.

The Court delimited the territorial sea, in accordance with article 15 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and with its own jurisprudence, in two stages: first, it drew a provisional median line; secondly, it considered whether any special circumstances existed that justified an adjustment to that line. As to special circumstances, the Court in particular stated that the instability of the sandbar separating Harbor Head Lagoon from the Caribbean Sea and its situation as a small enclave within Costa Rica's territory also called for a special solution. Noting that should territorial waters be attributed to the enclave, they would be of little use to Nicaragua, while breaking the continuity of Costa Rica's territorial sea, the Court decided that the delimitation in the territorial sea between the parties would not take into account any entitlement that might result from the enclave.

The Court then proceeded to the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf, using its established three-stage methodology. First, it drew a provisional equidistance line using base points located on the parties' natural coasts, including some Nicaraguan islands in the Caribbean Sea, among others the Corn Islands. Secondly, the Court considered whether there existed relevant circumstances that were capable of justifying an adjustment of the equidistance line provisionally drawn. It found in particular that, in view of their limited size and significant distance from the mainland coast, the Corn Islands should be given only half effect. Thirdly, the Court assessed the overall equitableness of the boundary resulting from the first two stages by checking whether there existed a marked disproportionality between the length of the parties' relevant coasts and the maritime areas found to appertain to them. In the circumstances at hand, the Court found that there was no such marked disproportion.

The Court focused next on the delimitation of the Pacific Ocean. Since Costa Rica and Nicaragua had agreed that the starting point of the maritime boundary in the Pacific Ocean should be the midpoint of the closing line of Salinas Bay, the Court fixed the starting point of its delimitation at that location.

As it did for the Caribbean Sea, the Court proceeded to delimit the boundary for the territorial sea in two stages. Having observed that both parties selected the same base points, the Court decided to use those points to draw the provisional median line. It considered that there were no special circumstances justifying an adjustment to that line.

For the purpose of delimiting the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf, the Court again followed the three-stage methodology adopted in its jurisprudence. First, it drew a provisional equidistance line, using the base points selected by the parties. Secondly, it checked for relevant circumstances justifying an adjustment to that line, deciding to give

half effect to the Santa Elena peninsula on Costa Rica's coast in order to avoid a significant cut-off effect of Nicaragua's coastal projections. Thirdly, the Court assessed the overall equitableness of the boundary resulting from the first two stages by checking whether there existed a marked disproportionality between the length of the parties' relevant coasts and the maritime areas found to appertain to them. It found that the maritime boundary did not result in gross disproportionality and achieved an equitable solution.

After the judgment was rendered, Nicaragua informed the Court, by a letter dated 14 February, that it had removed its military camp from Costa Rica's territory, in accordance with point 3 (b) of the operative paragraph of that judgment.

(*spoke in French*)

The third judgment of the Court, the content of which I will explain, was delivered on 6 June. It concerned the preliminary objections raised by France in the case concerning *Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France)*. That case was brought by Equatorial Guinea on 13 June 2016 relating to a dispute concerning the immunity from criminal jurisdiction of the Vice-President of Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, as well as the legal status of a building located at 42 avenue Foch in Paris, which Equatorial Guinea claimed was the premises of its embassy in France. In its application, Equatorial Guinea intended to base the jurisdiction of the Court on article 35 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, or the Palermo Convention, and on article 1 of the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes.

On 31 March 2017, France raised three preliminary objections. With regard to France's first preliminary objection, relating to the Palermo Convention, the Court concluded in its judgment that the rules of customary international law governing the immunities of States and their agents were not incorporated in article 4 of the Convention. However, the aspect of the dispute concerning the immunity invoked in favour of the Vice-President of Equatorial Guinea and the immunity invoked in favour of the building located at 42 Avenue Foch in Paris did not relate to the interpretation or the application of the Palermo Convention. The Court therefore considered that it did not have jurisdiction to rule on that aspect of the dispute. It then noted that Equatorial Guinea had also based on the Palermo Convention its complaints relating to the excessive criminal jurisdiction that it accused France of exercising in order to identify "predicate offences" associated with the offence of money laundering. The Court considered that the violations of which Equatorial Guinea was accused did not fall under the provisions of articles 6 and 15 of the Palermo Convention and that it was therefore, again, not competent to rule on that aspect of the dispute. As a result, the Court concluded that it did not have jurisdiction on the basis of the Palermo Convention and upheld France's first preliminary objection.

The Court then turned to France's second preliminary objection, which concerned jurisdiction under the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes. Equatorial Guinea drew on the Vienna Convention as grounds to denounce France's non-compliance with the inviolability of the building located at 42 avenue Foch in Paris, which it claimed housed its diplomatic mission. The Court noted that the parties disagreed as to whether the building in question was part of the premises of the Mission of Equatorial Guinea in France and could therefore benefit from the treatment afforded to such premises under article 22 of the Vienna Convention. It concluded that that aspect of the dispute fell within the scope of the Convention and that it therefore had jurisdiction in the dispute over the status of the building in question, including any claims relating to the furnishings and other property present on the premises at 42 avenue Foch in Paris. Consequently, the Court rejected France's second preliminary objection.

Lastly, the Court examined France's third preliminary objection, according to which the conduct of Equatorial Guinea amounted to an abuse of rights and the referral to the Court an abuse of procedure. In the Court's view, that preliminary objection concerned the admissibility of the application. The Court observed that an abuse of process related to proceedings initiated before a court or tribunal and could be considered at the preliminary stage of such proceedings. However, the Court added that only exceptional circumstances could justify its dismissal of an application for abuse of process on the basis of applicable jurisdiction. The Court deemed that such were not the circumstances in that particular case. With respect to the abuse of rights, the Court stated that such could not be invoked

as grounds for inadmissibility when the establishment of the right in question fell within the scope of the merits of the case. Accordingly, the Court held that any argument relating to an abuse of rights would be considered at the substantive stage. The Court therefore did not consider Equatorial Guinea's application inadmissible on grounds of abuse of process or abuse of rights and rejected the third preliminary objection raised by France.

As in its judgment the Court declared itself competent on the basis of the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention, the proceedings on the merits resumed. By an order made on the same day as its judgment, namely, 6 June, the Court set 6 December as the time limit for France to submit its counter-memorial.

I now come to the fourth judgment of the Court during the period in question. In the judgment of 1 October, the Court decided on the merits of the case concerning the *Obligation to Negotiate Access to the Pacific Ocean (Bolivia v. Chile)*. I would recall that that application was introduced on 24 April 2013 by the Plurinational State of Bolivia against the Republic of Chile concerning a dispute in relation to "Chile's obligation to negotiate in good faith and effectively with Bolivia in order to reach an agreement granting Bolivia a fully sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean".

After presenting the historical background of the dispute, in its judgment the Court proceeded to the systematic examination of the eight separate legal grounds invoked by Bolivia in support of its claim. The Court first considered Bolivia's argument based on bilateral instruments, concluding that none of those instruments established an obligation on Chile to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. The Court also did not find convincing the argument that Chile's declarations and other unilateral acts created an obligation to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea. It noted that those declarations and unilateral acts did not indicate the defendant having undertaken a legal obligation but rather that the defendant was willing to enter into negotiations.

Turning to the consideration of Bolivia's argument based on acquiescence, the Court noted that Bolivia had not identified any declaration requiring a response or reaction from Chile to prevent an obligation from arising. The Court concluded therefrom that the acquiescence could not therefore be considered a legal basis of an obligation to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea. The Court then turned to Bolivia's argument based on estoppel, concluding that, although Chile had repeatedly stated that it was willing to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea, such representations did not establish an obligation to negotiate, as it had not been demonstrated that Bolivia had changed its position to its detriment or to Chile's advantage on the basis of those representations.

With regard to the argument that the fact that the respondent, in challenging its obligation to negotiate and in refusing to conduct further negotiations with Bolivia, had prevented the latter's legitimate expectations from prevailing, the Court concluded that, even if reference was made to legitimate expectations in certain judgments of arbitral tribunals concerning investment disputes, it did not follow that there was a principle in general international law based on legitimate expectations that could lead to an obligation.

The Court also concluded that it could not accept the argument that an obligation to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea could be based on Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations or article 3 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, since those provisions prescribed only that States should settle their disputes by peaceful means or procedures, without imposing a specific method of settlement, such as negotiation. It also considered Bolivia's argument that certain resolutions of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States confirmed Chile's commitment to negotiating Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea. The Court could not accept that argument, as none of those resolutions indicated that Chile had an obligation to negotiate and that both parties had recognized that the resolutions were not binding as such.

Finally, the Court found that, having concluded that there was no such obligation arising from any of the invoked legal bases taken individually, a cumulative consideration of the various bases could not add to the overall result. The Court therefore concluded that Chile had not undertaken a legal obligation to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. However, it added — and I would like to stress this — that its finding should not be understood as precluding the parties from continuing their dialogue and exchanges, in a spirit of good-neighbourliness, to address the issues relating to the landlocked situation of Bolivia, the solution to which they have both recognized to be a matter of mutual interest.

I will now report on three non-judicial orders issued by the Court during the reporting period. I would first like to mention the Court's order of 15 November 2017 on the counter-claims filed in the case concerning *Alleged Violations of Sovereign Rights and Maritime Spaces in the Caribbean Sea (Nicaragua v. Colombia)*. I recall that, on 26 November 2013, the Republic of Nicaragua instituted proceedings against the Republic of Colombia, alleging specific violations of Nicaragua's sovereign rights and maritime zones declared by the Court's judgment of 19 November 2012. On 19 December 2014, Colombia raised preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court. By a judgment dated 17 March 2016, the Court found that it had jurisdiction, on the basis of article XXXI of the Pact of Bogotá, to adjudicate upon the dispute between Nicaragua and Colombia regarding the alleged violations by Colombia of Nicaragua's rights in the maritime zones which, according to Nicaragua, the Court declared appertain to Nicaragua in its judgment of 19 November 2012.

In its counter-memorial filed on 17 November 2016, Colombia submitted four counter-claims. The first and second were based on Nicaragua's alleged violation of its duty of due diligence to protect and preserve the marine environment of the south-western Caribbean Sea and the right of the inhabitants of the San Andrés archipelago to benefit from a healthy, sound and sustainable environment; the third concerned Nicaragua's alleged infringement upon the customary artisanal fishing rights of the local inhabitants of the San Andrés archipelago to access and exploit their traditional fishing grounds; and the fourth concerned the adoption by Nicaragua of Decree No. 33-2013 of 19 August 2013, which established straight baselines and, according to Colombia, had the effect of extending Nicaragua's internal waters and maritime zones beyond what international law permits.

In its order, the Court began by recalling that under article 80, paragraph 1, of the rules of Court, two requirements must be met for the Court to be able to entertain a counterclaim as such, namely, that the counterclaim come within the jurisdiction of the Court and that it be directly connected with the subject matter of the claim of the other party. The Court concluded that there was no direct connection, either in fact or in law, between Colombia's first and second counterclaims and Nicaragua's principal claims. It therefore found that those two counterclaims were inadmissible as such. In addition, the Court considered that Colombia's third and fourth counterclaims and Nicaragua's principal claims were directly connected in fact and in law. In that regard, the Court noted that the facts underlying their respective requests related to the same period and the same geographical area and were of the same nature insofar as they alleged similar types of conduct. The Court also noted that the parties had invoked the same legal principles and pursued the same legal aim by their respective claims.

The Court then concluded that Colombia's third and fourth counterclaims came under its jurisdiction. It further recalled that once the Court has established jurisdiction to entertain a case, it has jurisdiction to deal with all its phases; the subsequent lapse of the title cannot deprive the Court of its jurisdiction. In the present case, the subsequent termination of the Pact of Bogotá between the parties, which followed the filing of the application, did not deprive the Court of its jurisdiction to entertain those counter-claims filed by Colombia on that legal basis. The Court therefore found that Colombia's third and fourth counterclaims were admissible as such. It also ordered the submission of a reply from Nicaragua and a rejoinder from Colombia on the requests of both parties and set deadlines for the filing of those procedural documents.

As I mentioned earlier, during the reporting period the Court also issued two orders indicating interim measures, which I will briefly present in chronological order. On 23 July, the Court ordered interim measures in the case concerning the *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (*Qatar v. United Arab Emirates*). The case was brought by Qatar on 11 June against the United Arab Emirates concerning alleged violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted on 21 December 1965. In its statement of claim, Qatar claimed that, in violation of certain rights guaranteed by the Convention, the United Arab Emirates had banned the entry of all Qataris into its territory and expelled those already there. On the same day, Qatar had submitted a request for interim measures on the protection of its rights under the Convention, pending a decision on the merits of the case.

In accordance with its usual method, in its order, the Court first examined whether the jurisdictional clause contained in article 22 of the Convention conferred on it prima facie jurisdiction to hear the

merits of the case. It considered that the acts mentioned by Qatar were likely to fall within the scope ratione materiae of the Convention. The Court found that the evidence available to it at that stage of the proceedings was sufficient to support the existence of a dispute as to the interpretation or application of the Convention. It also found that the procedural conditions previously applicable to it, as set out in article 22 of the Convention, had been met. It concluded that, prima facie, it had jurisdiction under that article.

The Court then examined the rights whose protection was sought, noting that the measures taken by the United Arab Emirates appeared to target only Qataris, without regard to the individual situation of the persons concerned, and that they could constitute acts of racial discrimination under the Convention. The Court found that at least some of the rights claimed by Qatar under article 5 of the Convention were plausible. That applies, for example, to the right to marry and choose a spouse, the right to education, as well as the rights to freedom of movement and access to justice. The Court also concluded that there was a link between the rights for which protection was sought and the interim measures requested by Qatar. The Court was also of the view that some of the rights in question were such that any prejudice to them could prove irreparable and that there was therefore urgency.

The Court therefore concluded that the conditions for which the Statute of the Court required the indication of interim measures were met. It decided that, in order to protect Qatar's substantive rights, the United Arab Emirates should ensure that, first, Qatari-Emirati families separated as a result of the measures on 5 June 2017 are reunited; secondly, Qatari students affected by the measures adopted on 5 June 2017 could complete their studies in the United Arab Emirates or obtain their academic records if they wished to study elsewhere; and thirdly, Qataris affected by the measures adopted on 5 June 2017 could have access to the courts and other judicial bodies of the United Arab Emirates. The Court also called on both parties to refrain from any action that could aggravate or extend the dispute or make it more difficult to resolve. By an order issued on 25 July, the Court set the deadline for the filing of a memorial by the State of Qatar and a counter-memorial by the United Arab Emirates.

On 3 October, the Court issued a second order indicating provisional measures in the case concerning *Alleged violations of the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights* (*Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America*). On 16 July, Iran began proceedings against the United States concerning alleged violations of the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights, which I will refer to as the 1955 Treaty. In its statement of claim, Iran stated in particular that the dispute concerned the decision of the United States, announced on 8 May, to reinstate restrictive measures directly or indirectly targeting Iran and Iranian nationals and companies — measures that the United States had previously decided to lift as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which I will refer to as the action plan. According to the applicant, such measures are a violation by the United States of certain obligations under the 1955 Treaty, in particular those relating to fair and equitable treatment, the prohibition of restrictions on payments and freedom of trade. Iran intended to base the Court's jurisdiction on Article 36, paragraph 1, of the Statute and article XXI, paragraph 2, of the 1955 Treaty, the latter provision being an arbitration clause by which the parties had agreed to refer to the Court any dispute between them concerning the interpretation or application of the Treaty not satisfactorily adjusted through diplomacy, unless they had agreed to settlement by some other pacific means.

Iran also submitted a request for interim measures on 16 July. In its ruling on this request, the Court began by ascertaining whether the provisions invoked by the plaintiff appeared to constitute, prima facie, a basis on which to establish its jurisdiction. It first ensured that a dispute existed between the parties as to the interpretation or application of the 1955 Treaty. It found that the evidence before it at that stage of the proceedings was sufficient to establish that the measures Iran criticized the United States for adopting could, prima facie, fall within the scope *ratione materiae* of the 1955 Treaty.

The Court held that the provision relied on by the United States, which does not prohibit contracting parties from taking certain measures to protect their vital security interests, did not exclude the authority it held as part of the arbitration clause of the Treaty. It further found that the dispute had not been satisfactorily settled through the diplomatic channel and that the parties had not agreed to settle it by other peaceful means. The Court concluded that the 1955 Treaty gave it jurisdiction, prima facie, to hear the dispute, so long as

the dispute concerned the interpretation or application of the Treaty.

The Court then turned its attention to the rights for protection that had been sought. It considered that the rights claimed by Iran were plausible, to the extent that they were based on a possible interpretation of the 1955 Treaty and on the *prima facie* establishment of the relevant facts, and that the exercise of some of these rights was likely to be undermined by the measures adopted by the United States. At the same time, the Court found it necessary to take into account the fact that the United States invoked paragraph 1 of article XX of the 1955 Treaty to assert its vital security interests. It noted that these interests may affect at least some of the rights guaranteed to Iran under the 1955 Treaty but, all things considered, would not affect others in the same way. Iran's rights, the exercise of which could be threatened, included those related to the importation and purchase of goods necessary for humanitarian purposes, such as medicines and medical equipment, food and agricultural products, and goods and services necessary for the safety of civil aviation, such as spare parts, equipment and related services required for civil aircraft.

The Court then turned to the question of the link between the rights claimed by Iran and the provisional measures it requested. The Court concluded that there was a link between some of these rights, the protection of which was sought, and certain aspects of the provisional measures requested. It further considered that there was always a risk that the measures taken by the United States would have irreparable consequences and that this was therefore a matter of urgency. For all of these considerations, the Court concluded that the conditions under which its Statute would support these provisional measures were indeed met. It therefore indicated the following precautionary measures.

First, the United States must, through means of its own choosing, remove any impediment that the measures announced on 8 May pose to free export to the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran of medicines and medical equipment; food and agricultural products; and spare parts, equipment and related services, including post-sale services, maintenance, repairs and inspections necessary for the safety of civil aviation. Secondly, the United States must ensure that, where the goods and services referred to in the first part are concerned, the necessary permits and authorizations are granted and payments and other transfers of funds are unrestricted. Thirdly, the two parties must refrain from taking any action that might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or otherwise render a solution more difficult.

(*spoke in English*)

I will now turn to the new cases brought before the Court. In addition to the two cases just referred to — between Qatar and the United Arab Emirates and between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America, in which the Court issued orders indicating provisional measures — a further four sets of contentious proceedings have been instituted since 1 August 2017.

On 29 March, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana instituted proceedings against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with regard to a dispute concerning "the legal validity and binding effect of the Award regarding the Boundary between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela, of 3 October 1899". In its application, Guyana claims that the 1899 award was a full and final settlement of all questions relating to the determination of the boundary line between the colony of British Guiana and Venezuela but that, for the first time in 1962, Venezuela contested the award as arbitrary and null and void.

According to Guyana, this dispute remains ongoing. Guyana therefore requests the Court to confirm the validity of the 1899 award and to order Venezuela to respect the boundary established pursuant to that award. From the outset, Venezuela has challenged the jurisdiction of the Court to entertain the case. By an order dated 19 June, the Court decided that the written pleadings in the case should first address the question of its jurisdiction. It fixed the respective time limits for the filing of a memorial by Guyana and a counter-memorial by Venezuela.

Two further sets of proceedings were brought before the Court on 4 July. First, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates submitted to the Court a joint application constituting an appeal against the decision rendered by the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on 29 June. That took place in the context of proceedings initiated by the State of Qatar against those four States on 30 October 2017, pursuant to article 84 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago Convention.

Secondly, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates submitted to the Court another joint application constituting an appeal against the decision rendered by the ICAO Council in proceedings initiated by Qatar against those three States on 30 October 2017, pursuant to article II, section 2, of the International Air Services Transit Agreement. The factual background of the two cases is the same. According to the applications, on 5 June 2017, after Qatar had allegedly failed to abide by its commitments under a series of instruments and undertakings referred to collectively as the Riyadh Agreements, the applicants adopted measures that included airspace restrictions to aircraft registered in Qatar.

On 30 October 2017, Qatar instituted proceedings against the applicants before ICAO, alleging that the airspace restrictions violated the Chicago Convention and the International Air Services Transit Agreement. In those ICAO proceedings, the applicants raised preliminary objections, which were rejected in two decisions of the ICAO Council rendered on 29 June 2018. Those are the two decisions that are being appealed before the International Court of Justice. Orders dated 25 July 2018 in the two cases fixed the respective time limits for the filing of a memorial by the applicants and a counter-memorial by Qatar.

On 28 September 2018, the State of Palestine instituted proceedings against the United States of America with respect to a dispute concerning alleged violations of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961. It is recalled that, on 5 July 2018, Palestine had filed a declaration pursuant to Security Council resolution 9 (1946), whereby it accepted the jurisdiction of the Court for the settlement of disputes under article I of the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations Concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes, to which the State of Palestine acceded on 22 March 2018. In its application, the State of Palestine contends that it flows from the Vienna Convention that the diplomatic mission of a sending State must be established on the territory of the receiving State.

That completes my summary of the Court's extensive judicial activities over the past year. In the spirit of transparency, I would now like to take this opportunity to touch upon the question of extrajudicial activities that members of the Court occasionally undertake, particularly in the field of international arbitration. The Court is cognizant of the fact that, while the judicial settlement of disputes offered by the Court is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, for several reasons States may be interested in settling their disputes by arbitration. In such instances, members of the Court have sometimes been called upon by States to sit on the arbitral tribunal in question, dealing with inter-State disputes in some cases and investor-State disputes in others. That is, of course, a testament to the high esteem in which the Court's judges are held by the international community.

Over the years, the Court has taken the view that, in certain circumstances, its members may participate in arbitration proceedings. However, in the light of its ever-increasing workload, a few months ago the Court decided to review that practice and to set out clearly defined rules regulating such activities. As a result, last month members of the Court came to the decision that they would not normally agree to participate in international arbitration. In particular, they will not participate in investor-State arbitration or in commercial arbitration.

However, in the event that they are called upon exceptionally by one or more States that would prefer to resort to arbitration instead of judicial settlement, the Court has decided that, in order to render service to those States, it will, if the circumstances so warrant, authorize its members to participate in inter-State arbitration cases. Even in such exceptional cases, a member of the Court, if authorized, will participate in only one arbitration procedure at a time. Prior authorization must have been granted for that purpose in accordance with the mechanism put in place by the Court.

However, members of the Court will decline to be appointed as arbitrators by a State that is party to a case pending before the Court, even if there is no substantial interference between that case and the case submitted to arbitration. That is essential to place the impartiality and independence of judges in the exercise of their judicial functions beyond reproach. Finally, I cannot stress enough that any participation of members of the Court in such inter-State arbitrations is subject to the strict condition that their judicial activities take absolute precedence.

Before I come to my closing remarks, I would like briefly to raise an issue that is of concern to the Court regarding the Peace Palace, which houses the principal

courtroom — the Great Hall of Justice — and the offices of the Registry. In 2016, following inspections of the premises, the Peace Palace was found to be contaminated with asbestos. As a result, the Netherlands authorities decided that major works should be undertaken to completely decontaminate and, at the same time, renovate the building. The Court understands that it is anticipated that the Peace Palace will have to close and that the Registry of the Court, including the Court's library and archives, will have to be temporarily relocated to other premises for perhaps a few years. However, the Court remains somewhat uninformed as to the modalities and time frame for that large-scale relocation. The Court has been told by the Netherlands authorities that details of the proposed relocation plans would be provided without delay so as to ensure a smooth transition period with minimum disruption to its busy schedule of work.

Despite those assurances, to date the Court does not have any further elements of clarification at its disposal. That creates an atmosphere of uncertainty that is not conducive to the performance of its judicial functions. We therefore trust that ample and adequate information will be received in a timely manner in the very near future.

That brings my first address before the Assembly as President of the International Court of Justice to an end. The Court has made every endeavour to fulfil the noble mission entrusted to it in terms of the advancement of international justice and the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. It has continued to focus its attention on many complex areas of international law raised by the multifaceted disputes brought before it. Those thorny legal issues often lie at the heart of the international community's current concerns. In that connection, the Court is acutely aware that, through its rulings, it has a responsibility to serve all Member States by safeguarding respect for the rule of law in international relations.

I am grateful for having been given the opportunity to address the Assembly today, and I wish the General Assembly at its seventy-third session every success.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the International Court of Justice.

Mr. Špaček (Slovakia): On behalf of the Visegrad Group, namely, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and my own country, Slovakia, I thank the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, for presenting the report on the work of the Court during the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018 (A/73/4). I would also like to congratulate Judge Yusuf on his election as the Court's President in February this year and to acknowledge the Court's achievements under his leadership.

I have the honour to present the common position of the Visegrad countries with respect to the Court's report. Let me begin by underlining the key and irreplaceable role of the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, in the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. The increasing number of States submitting their differences to the Court's adjudication reflects their confidence in the Court. During the period under consideration, five new contentious proceedings have been instituted before the Court and three judgments in four cases and several orders have been delivered by the Court. They are testimony to both the trustfulness and the efficiency of the Court in rendering international justice. The countries of the Visegrad Group are strong supporters of the Court, and they appreciate the Court's remarkable long-term contribution to the prevention of conflicts and to the enhancement of good and friendly relations among States.

With respect to the Court's report, I would like to address two issues that are mutually inseparable. The first concerns the broadening of acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction. The Statute of the Court offers States various means of acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction. Currently, 73 States out of the 193 States parties to the Court's Statute accept the Court's compulsory jurisdiction under Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute. Special agreements on the submission of differences between States to the Court offer another means of accepting the Court's jurisdiction. Their significance should not be underestimated.

In addition, the numerous treaties that are currently being negotiated, whether within or outside the United Nations, should routinely include, as an indispensable component, provisions on the peaceful settlement of disputes, including clauses on the Court's jurisdiction in terms of the interpretation and application of the treaty in question. States should be discouraged from making reservations to such clauses. The willingness of States to subject their disputes to the Court must go hand in hand with their willingness to implement the Court's decisions in good faith. Only then will the

Court's judgments and orders ensure that the system of international justice is truly effective.

The second issue I would like to highlight is the Court's significant contribution to the strengthening of the rule of law at the international level. The 17 cases on the Court's agenda concern different subjects and areas of international law, including maritime, territorial and environmental issues, human rights, State immunities, international responsibility, and the interpretation of treaties. The wide range of issues c rrently before the Court, together with the variety of regions from which the parties to those disputes originate, is a manifestation of the Court's universal character and its indispensable role in the noble mission of the United Nations to maintain the international legal order.

The countries of the Visegrad Group highly appreciate the achievements of the Court in interpreting, clarifying and reinforcing international law and wish the Court every success in its future work.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the 120 States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the occasion of the consideration of such an important agenda item.

We thank the President of the International Court of Justice for his presentation of the report on the work of the Court to the General Assembly (A/73/4).

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its principled positions regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as its rejection of the use and threat of use of force. The International Court of Justice plays an important role in promoting the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly in its Articles 33 and 94, and in the Statute of the International Court of Justice itself.

Regarding the advisory opinions of the Court, considering that the Security Council has not requested any kind of advisory opinion from the Court since 1970, the Non-Aligned Movement urges the Security Council to make greater use of the Court, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, as a source of advisory opinions and interpretation of the relevant rules of international law, in particular on contentious issues. It also urges the Council to consider having its decisions reviewed by the Court, mindful of the need to ensure that it adheres to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The Non-Aligned Movement invites the General Assembly, the organs of the United Nations and other specialized agencies to request the advisory opinion of the Court on legal matters that fall within the scope of its activities.

The States members of the Non-Aligned Movement also reaffirm the importance of the unanimous advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996 on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex). In that regard, the Court found that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to fully respect the advisory opinion of the Court of 9 July 2004 on the *Legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory* (see A/ES-10/273). It calls upon all States to ensure that the provisions set forth in that advisory opinion are respected, with a view to ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and achieving the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Fialho Rocha (Cabo Verde): It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Angola, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Timor-Leste and my own country, Cabo Verde — all States members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, for his thorough report on the Court's work for the judicial year 2017-2018 (A/73/4).

The International Court of Justice is the only international court of a universal character with general jurisdiction. The Court holds important responsibilities in the international community. It also plays a fundamental role in the judicial settlement of disputes between States and the strengthening of the international rule of law. By providing legal certainty and enabling the peaceful settlement of inter-State disputes, the Court helps to prevent disagreements between States from erupting into violence. The high rate of compliance with the Court's judgments throughout its history is very encouraging, as it

demonstrates the trust of States in the independence and impartiality of the Court.

The Court has a crucial function in the international legal system and it is being increasingly recognized and accepted. All States Members of the United Nations are parties to the Statute of the Court, and 73 of those have recognized its jurisdiction as compulsory. Moreover, approximately 300 bilateral and multilateral treaties provide for the Court to have jurisdiction over the resolution of disputes arising from their application or interpretation. The heavy workload and the wide range of subjects on which the Court has ruled confirm its success. It must be noted that the Court's cases come from all over the world, relate to a great variety of matters and have great factual and legal complexity. That reaffirms the universality of the Court, the expansion of the scope of its work and its growing specialization. The Court is making impressive efforts to cope with the very demanding level of activity. However, it is also important for Member States to acknowledge the Court's need for adequate resources.

The Court has often recalled that everything it does is aimed at promoting the rule of law. Indeed, that is so. It is worth mentioning the outstanding contribution of the International Court of Justice to the development of international law, including with regard to the use of force, the delimitation of maritime boundaries, self-determination and the immunity of States and their actors, among others. The judgments and advisory opinions of the Court have inspired other international decision-making bodies. Similarly, it is commendable that the Court also pays due regard to the work of international tribunals. That positive trend should be encouraged, since it gives more coherence and legal certainty to the international system. CPLP member States strongly believe that international tribunals should cooperate towards the enhancement of the international legal order through dialogue and cross-fertilization.

We acknowledge that tension frequently exists between law and power. The obligation of States to settle their disputes in a peaceful manner and the need for sovereign consent to resort to such mechanisms are sometimes hard to balance. However, it is our firm belief that the Court is an institutional pillar of the international community. CPLP member States are confident that the Court will continue to overcome the challenges that it will increasingly be undertaken. The diversity and importance of the cases submitted to the Court illustrate the trust that States put in it. For our part, the CPLP member States pledge their strong support to the Court in carrying out its fundamental role in settling the disputes of States, as well as in strengthening the international rule of law towards justice and peace.

Ms. Mckenna (Australia): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the group of countries Canada, New Zealand and my own country, Australia.

The group would like to thank the President of the International Court of Justice for his report on the work of the Court over the past year (A/73/4). The group firmly supports the Court and the international rules-based order. As the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the Court plays a critical role in facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and in maintaining and promoting the rule of law throughout the world. The group notes that over the past 20 years the Court's workload has grown considerably. The cases submitted to the Court cover a diverse geographical spread of States and involve a wide variety of subject matters. The willingness of States to entrust the Court with their disputes reflects their deep respect for the Court and underlines the Court's institutional significance as a mechanism for States to resolve their disputes peacefully.

The importance that the Canada-Australia-New Zealand group of countries attaches to the role of the Court and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law is reflected in our acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court. The group is convinced that the acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction by the widest possible assembly of States enables the Court to most effectively fulfil its role by broadening the options available to States to resolve their disputes and by allowing it to focus its attention on the substance of disputes more quickly. In that regard, the group recalls resolution 72/119 and urges States that have not yet done so to deposit with the Secretary-General a declaration of acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court.

Finally, Canada, Australia and New Zealand would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Judge Owada and Judge Greenwood for their substantial contribution to the Court and to the development of international law. The group of countries congratulates Judge Salam and Judge Iwasawa on their election to the Court, as well as President Yusuf and Judge Abraham,

Judge Cançado Trindade and Judge Bhandari on their re-election.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand appreciate the Court's efforts to manage its demanding caseload. We encourage it to continue its efforts to provide timely and appropriate responses to urgent situations and to ensure high levels of efficiency and quality in its work. The group looks forward to the Court continuing to fulfil its mandate with the same meticulous and impartial attention as it has shown over the past year.

Mr. Jaiteh (Gambia): The Gambia has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. The African Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

At the outset, the African Group would like to congratulate Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf on his appointment as President of the International Court of Justice and to thank him for the presentation of his detailed report (A/73/4). We would also like to extend our congratulations to the recently elected judges of the Court on their very successful election.

The African Group continues to consider the International Court of Justice to be the pre-eminent mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes at the international level. It should be kept in mind that the Court, as a court of justice and, moreover, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, occupies a special position. Everything that the Court does is aimed at promoting the rule of law. The World Court hands down judgments and give advisory opinions in accordance with its Statute, which is an integral part of the Charter of the United Nations, and thereby contributes to promoting and clarifying international law.

The African Group welcomes the reaffirmed confidence that States have shown in the Court's ability to resolve their disputes. In particular, we are pleased to see that States continue to refer disputes to the International Court of Justice. We commend States for no longer limiting their referral of cases to matters of little political significance, but also referring disputes involving weighty political issues. The number of cases currently pending on the Court's docket is a reflection of the esteem in which States hold the International Court of Justice.

Notwithstanding the proliferation of international judicial dispute-settlement mechanisms on both a specialized and a regional basis, the International Court of Justice continues to attract a wide range of cases, covering many areas. While its determination that there is an obligation to cooperate is based principally on treaty obligations, the Court also clearly draws upon general principles, particularly in making the link between procedural and substantive obligations.

The principle of prevention, enunciated in earlier decisions of the Court, notably the *Corfu Channel (United Kingdom v. Albania)* case and the advisory opinion on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (A/51/218, annex), is drawn upon significantly by the Court. As such, the African Group reaffirms the importance of the unanimous advisory opinion issued on 8 July 1996 on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons*. In that decision, the Court concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The African Group attaches great importance to that matter because Africa is a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

After another two decades, the International Court of Justice again had the opportunity to decide on issues pertaining to nuclear weapons. The African Group notes that the Court dismissed the three cases submitted by the Marshall Islands on the *Obligations concerning Negotiations relating to Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and to Nuclear Disarmament (Marshall Islands v. India), (Marshall Islands v. Pakistan) and (Marshall Islands v. United Kingdom)*. However, it is worth keeping in mind the closeness of the votes regarding those cases.

The African Group commends the efficiency and professionalism with which the Court has treated the request of the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 71/292, for an advisory opinion on the *Legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965*. Resolution 71/292 was adopted by an overwhelming majority, testifying the great interest that the membership of the United Nations attaches to the Court's opinion on the matter — an opinion that will assist the United Nations in its functions in relation to decolonization. The African Group welcomes the Court's decision that allowed the African Union to participate in the hearings on the question of the *Legal consequences of the*

separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, as mentioned in the Court's most recent report.

We reiterate our full confidence in the Court as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and in its very balanced and respected judges. The importance of the advisory opinion on legal questions referred to the International Court of Justice cannot be overstated in the pursuit of the peaceful settlement of legal disputes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In conclusion, it is for the foregoing reasons that the African Group is pleased to inform the Court that the request contained in document A/73/144 for the inclusion of an item entitled "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the consequences of legal obligations of States under different sources of international law with respect to immunities of Heads of State and Government and other senior officials" on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session was unanimously adopted by the Assembly (see A/73/PV.3). The African Group looks forward to engaging the General Assembly with a view to presenting to the Court appropriate legal questions on this matter.

Mr. Mikami (Japan): I would like to begin by thanking Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, for his dedication and leadership, as well as for his in-depth and comprehensive report on the work of the Court (A/73/4). I also express my deep appreciation and support for the achievements of the Court during the reporting period, as well as for the dedicated work of the Registry under the able guidance of the Registrar, Mr. Philippe Couvreur, which has supported these achievements. I would also like to express my respect to former Judge Hisashi Owada for his long-standing contribution to the Court and welcome Judge Yuji Iwasawa, who assumed his post as a member of the Court this year.

Japan commends the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, for the important role that it has played over the years in the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the promotion of the rule of law. The rule of law together with the peaceful settlement of international disputes provides the essential foundation for stable, rules-based international relations and are essential principles underpinning Japan's foreign policy. Japan became a State party to the Statute of the Court in 1954, two years before it joined the United Nations. Japan has accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court since 1958.

Japan is making its own active efforts to promote the rule of law. Recently, we had the honour of hosting the fifty-seventh annual session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) in Tokyo. As the host country, Japan took the initiative to introduce a new agenda item, "Peaceful settlement of disputes". In our discussions under this agenda item, the attention of the members was drawn to the fact that the submission of disputes to the International Court of Justice has increased progressively since the end of the cold war. In fact, during the 27 years since 1991, 81 contentious cases have been submitted to the Court, in sharp contrast to the 67 cases brought before the Court in the 45 years from 1947 to 1991. Today, 73 States have made the "optional clause" declaration under Article 36, paragraph 2 of the Statute, and about 300 bilateral and multilateral treaties recognize the Court's jurisdiction over disputes concerning the interpretation or application of those treaties.

As far as Asian and African countries are concerned, it was also pointed out that, generally speaking, Asia-Pacific States still seem cautious about utilizing the International Court of Justice mechanism. For example, as of 1 October, only eight Asia-Pacific States had made the "optional clause" declaration, which represents 15 per cent of the Group of Asia-Pacific States members. The increase in the number of cases brought before the Court speaks for itself, in that more and more States respect and support the legal wisdom of the Court and the role it plays in the peaceful settlement of international disputes. In order to encourage other States to follow suit, Japan sincerely hopes that the Court will continue to deliver fair judgments and advisory opinions that can enjoy the confidence of States. Japan believes that this is the only way for the International Court of Justice to enhance its credibility in the international community in the long run.

The international community today enjoys the benefit of numerous peaceful means of dispute settlement other than the International Court of Justice, such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, arbitral tribunals, international investment tribunals and the dispute-settlement system of the World Trade Organization. Japan welcomes the availability of diverse forums to settle legal disputes and views the

current trend of States utilizing these various means as appropriate, but there is no doubt that the International Court of Justice occupies a special and central place among them.

In the AALCO conference, it was also pointed out by Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, that disputes between States may be "inherent to the process by which international law is made". In this regard, given the increasing diversification of the means of peaceful settlement, Japan would like to encourage international courts and tribunals to make efforts to ensure the consistency of jurisprudence created by these courts and tribunals in order to avoid the fragmentation of international law.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our unwavering support for the Court. We are convinced that the Court will continue to make a significant contribution to clarifying international law, thereby strengthening the rule of law.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Sudan aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Gambia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively.

My delegation takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the International Court of Justice (A/73/4). We would like to thank Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the Court, for introducing the report, which reflects the activities and work of the Court during the reporting period. Every year since 1968, the General Assembly has taken up consideration of the report of the International Court of Justice as an integral part of efforts aimed at promoting relations between the two main organs of the United Nations — the Court itself and the General Assembly.

It is undeniable that the role the Court plays is important. First of all, it contributes to the promotion of peace. Indeed, the United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The Charter of the United Nations provides, as one of the Organization's objectives, that conditions are to be established that lead to maintaining justice and upholding international law.

Accordingly, the International Court of Justice, as the main judicial organ of the United Nations, plays a key role. Although judgments rendered by the Court are binding solely for the parties concerned, the Court's jurisprudence still has far-reaching effects because of the strength of messages it sends to the world. By exercising its functions to bring about the peaceful settlement of disputes, it plays an important role in preventing the outbreak of conflicts, which is an important contribution to the wider United Nations efforts being made in the service of peace.

Secondly, the Court plays a role in promoting the rule of law, not only in terms of relations between States, but also across the United Nations system. The vision set forth in the United Nations Charter cannot be realized without the rule of law, which is the basis on which we carry out our work, be it for peace, security, sustainable development or human rights. The judgments delivered by the International Court of Justice, together with its advisory opinions, are essential parts of promoting the international community's commitment to the rule of law.

Thirdly, the International Court of Justice is more relevant today than ever. The annual report before us today details an increase during the reporting period in the level of attention paid by the States to the work of the Court, which once again shows that the Court is contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by taking up and settling disputes from numerous States across the world. It is encouraging to see the current positive trend of States accepting the Court's compulsory jurisdiction. Furthermore, the General Assembly's annual consideration of the Court's report shows that Member States have an ongoing interest in the work being carried out at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the role that the International Court of Justice has been playing in promoting the rule of law at the international level. Through its judgments, advisory opinions and other fundamental contributions to the system of the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Court, as the main judicial organ of the United Nations, has been carrying out its responsibilities set forth in the Charter. The Court's activities in adjudicating sensitive matters require political support from Member States and the allocation of a sufficient budget to allow it to completely fulfil its tasks. Today's debate on the annual report is a good opportunity for the General Assembly to reaffirm its support for the role and the work of the Court.

The many cases before the Court reveal the increasing level of trust in the International Court of Justice and its ability to settle disputes with impartiality, independence and in a manner that is accepted by the parties to a dispute. The Sudan would like to encourage the Court to take further measures to enhance its efficiency and ability in order to respond to the steady increase in its workload and responsibilities, particularly with respect to the swift consideration of cases before it.

My delegation also asks the General Assembly to call upon those States that have not yet recognized the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court to do so in order to promote the rule of law at the international level and enable the Court to carry out its work under the Charter. The Sudan also calls upon the Security Council, which has not requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice since 1970 — almost a half-century ago — to take advantage of the Court's role as the main judicial organ of the United Nations and source of advisory opinions on the interpretation of principles of international law related to the Council's activities. We also call on the General Assembly and other United Nations organs and specialized agencies to request advisory opinions from the Court on questions of international law matters relevant to their programmes.

We commend the Court's unwavering impartiality since 1945. When we look at the history of the Court, we have seen that it has always been impartial, which reassures parties as they await judgments and orders on the various cases on the Court's docket, especially those currently under consideration.

In conclusion, the Sudan wishes to reiterate its appreciation for the role of the International Court of Justice and expresses its support for the Court in the exercise of its necessary functions.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru, as a country committed to multilateralism and international law, welcomes the report introduced in the General Assembly today by the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, which describes the work carried out between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 (A/73/4). Similarly, we congratulate Judge Yusuf on his election in February as President of the Court.

The International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, plays a fundamental role in the system of the peaceful settlement of disputes as established in the Charter of the United Nations, which is an essential contribution to the promotion of the rule of law at the international level. We therefore reaffirm the need for the Organization and, in particular, the Security Council, of which we are currently a part, to promote the use of means of peaceful settlement of disputes set out in Chapter VI of the Charter. Accordingly, having resorted to the contentious jurisdiction of the Court, we can testify to its effectiveness in resolving disputes between States. Indeed, we stress the peaceful settlement of the maritime delimitation dispute with Chile, and we highlight the compliance of both States with the resolution provided by the Court, in a spirit of good-neighbourliness.

Peru wishes to recall that, in addition to its contentious function, the Court may also, in accordance with Article 96 of the Charter, issue advisory opinions at the request of the General Assembly, the Security Council or other authorized organs of the United Nations and specialized agencies. These are the two areas of jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, which, through judgments, orders, and opinions, contribute to promoting and clarifying the scope of international law as a true option for peace.

In the light of the foregoing, Peru is pleased to note that the General Assembly has once again urged States that have not yet done so to consider recognizing the jurisdiction of the Court, in accordance with Article 36, paragraph 2, of its Statute, as Peru has done along with 72 other States. My delegation also wishes to acknowledge the work of the eminent judges of the Court, in particular the President and the Vice-President.

We also wish to put on record our appreciation for the valuable task performed by the Registry of the Court, especially its Registrar and Deputy Registrar. In this context, we call on the General Assembly to continue to carefully consider the needs of the Court, taking into account its current activity, which has been particularly intense.

The sustained high level of activity of the International Court of Justice is an expression of the prestige enjoyed by the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. This prestige is also reflected in the diversity of the geographical distribution of the cases that have come before it, affirming the universal nature of its jurisdiction. In this vein, given what is established in Article 9 of the Statute of the Court, Peru wishes to

highlight the importance of Latin America's presence among the group of major States in order to ensure that the main legal systems of the world are duly represented.

It is also pertinent that we continue to reflect on ways to adapt the working methods of the Court to respond to the procedural challenges and the complexities of the cases before it. We reiterate our appreciation to the host State, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for its constant commitment to and support for the work of the Court. We emphasize the importance of cooperation between the Court and the other principal organs of the Organization that are based in New York. In this regard, my delegation encourages the continuation of the good relationship between the International Court of Justice and the Security Council.

I would like to conclude by once again stressing the profound significance that we attribute to the work of the International Court of Justice in the defence of a rules-based international order. This is essential if the international community is to effectively confront the serious global challenges and threats to international peace and security.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): My delegation would like to start by thanking the President of the International Court of Justice, His Excellency Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, for his very comprehensive briefing on the activities of the International Court of Justice over the past year. We also congratulate Judge Yusuf on his election as President of the Court, as well as Judge Xue Hanqin on her election as Vice-President. We would also like to congratulate the newest members of the Court, Judge Nawaf Salam and Judge Yuji Iwasawa, on their respective elections.

Singapore firmly believes that international relations must be governed by the rule of law in order to preserve international peace and stability and that the International Court of Justice plays a fundamental role in the rules-based multilateral system. For more than 70 years, the Court has helped to crystallize and clarify international law in areas as diverse as the law of the sea, territorial sovereignty, the use of force and treaty interpretation, to name but a few examples. In our view, the role of the Court is more important today than ever before. As mentioned by our Minister for Foreign Affairs during the General Assembly high-level debate, we have in recent years witnessed a crisis of confidence in the concept of multilateralism and its institutions (see A/73/PV.14). Whether in trade, security or dispute resolution, questions have arisen about whether the multilateral system can continue to deliver the effective solutions we need to overcome global challenges.

Against that backdrop, the compliance of all States with the agreed rules is especially important to small States, such as Singapore. That is why Singapore has been a staunch defender of the United Nations, international law and the rules-based multilateral system. We are very heartened by the statement in the report of the Court that everything the Court does is aimed at promoting and reinforcing the rule of law, which is the fundamental and primary role of the International Court of Justice. We encourage the Court to adhere unstintingly to this goal, and fundamental to that is the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, which is enshrined in Articles 2 and 33 of the Charter of the United Nations. The International Court of Justice performs a critical role in this context by providing an objective and authoritative forum for States to resolve their disputes in accordance with the established rules and principles of international law.

Turning to the work of the Court during the period under review, Singapore was involved in two cases before the Court, both of which were filed in 2017. The first concerned Malaysia's application for a revision of the Court's judgment of 23 May 2008 in the case concerning *Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge*, pursuant to Article 61 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice. The second case concerned Malaysia's request for an interpretation of the same judgment, pursuant to Article 60 of the Court's Statute. On 29 May 2018, Singapore informed the Court that it agreed with Malaysia's requests for the discontinuance of both cases. The Court subsequently placed on record the discontinuance of both cases, which have been removed from the Court's list of cases. What is noteworthy is that both parties — Singapore and Malaysia — had gone through the legal process and amicably put the matter to rest. Singapore would also like to express its appreciation to the Registry of the Court for facilitating the efficient and expeditious administration of both of the cases I have just referred to.

Finally, on the issue of online resources and services, we welcome the Court's continued efforts to leverage technology and social media in order to raise awareness of and bring transparency to its work. The regular updates provided on its new website, as well as the live and on-demand coverage of its public sittings,

help to make the Court's proceedings more accessible, especially to the many small States that do not have a presence in The Hague.

In closing, Singapore reaffirms its very strong support for the work of the Court. We are aware that the Court's caseload continues to be very demanding, as we have just heard in the detailed briefing provided by the President of the Court. But we are confident that under the able leadership of President Yusuf and Vice-President Xue Hanqin, the Court will continue to discharge its duties efficiently and with great distinction.

Ms. Orosan (Romania): At the outset of my brief statement, let me convey the appreciation of the Romanian delegation for the valuable and detailed information included in this year's report of the International Court of Justice, in particular in respect of the judicial activity undertaken by the Court during the period concerned (A/73/4). The report illustrates a particularly high level of intensity in the work of the principal United Nations judicial body. Several cases were finalized, providing important clarifications in respect of difficult questions of international law for the benefit of legal practitioners everywhere. The current docket of the Court continues to register a substantial number of cases involving countries from various regions of the world and concerning issues of great interest, not only to the parties involved, but also to the entire international community.

We are fully aware that the increasing workload places additional burdens on the Court and makes even more uncompromising the need to ensure that the Court has sufficient resources to fulfil its tasks. Nevertheless, the increased willingness of States to turn to the Court is a trend to be welcomed. We cannot but remark that many of the cases submitted to the Court concern issues that are both complex and politically sensitive, which stands as proof of the trust that States continue to place in the Court as the principal means for peacefully resolving international disputes in the event that attempts to reach settlements through dialogue and negotiations do not bring the disputes to satisfactory resolution.

The Court cannot act *proprio motu* or in the absence of the consent of all State parties to a dispute brought before it. It is therefore States that, through their consent, empower the Court to act and give it the opportunity to contribute to world peace through dispute resolution based on the application of law. It is also through States' conduct in implementing the decisions of the Court that they abide by the logic of the United Nations Charter and act within the scope of the United Nations itself. This gives meaning to the system — a solid international legal order — that States have put in place to safeguard peace and security worldwide.

Romania can offer itself as an example of how its approach vis-à-vis the International Court of Justice has changed over time. From a State that recognized the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court's predecessor, the Permanent Court of International Justice, Romania became a State strongly opposed to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice during communism, only to revert to its initial position more than 50 years later when it deposited a declaration of acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, in 2015.

Romania encourages States to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice to adjudicate international law disputes and notes that there are various means through which such acceptance can occur — either on an ad hoc basis, on a specific treaty basis or on a permanent basis. Irrespective of the means, we should empower the Court to act in an irreversible manner.

At the ceremony to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that if the path of peace is chosen and States entrust the judges to resolve differences between them, stability is fostered and the entire international community benefits. I would like to echo those words and underline that it is in everyone's best interest that States choose to resolve their disputes by taking recourse in the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice when other means of peacefully settling a dispute have been unsuccessful. The Court is not there just to decorate our living space, but to adjust that space to accommodate and preserve harmony through the application of international law.

In a world marked by serious challenges to peace and security, the International Court of Justice, as a fundamental pillar of peace and good-neighbourly relations around the world, plays a central part in promoting the international legal order. Romania reaffirms its support for the main judicial body of the United Nations and underscores its trust in the Court's impartiality, effectiveness and professionalism.

Mr. Nfati (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Judge Abdulqawi

Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, for his valuable briefing. I congratulate him on his election as President of the Court and wish him and the other members of the Court every success.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Gambia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively.

The international community has always deemed it necessary to have a permanent international judiciary for the settlement of international disputes. That aspiration was fulfilled when, after the formation of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice was established as one of the new Organization's principal organs. The Court plays a dual role: first, in settling disputes that are brought before it, and, secondly, in issuing advisory opinions. But the question that we ask ourselves today is whether the International Court of Justice is fulfilling the role entrusted to it.

We find that 80 per cent of the cases brought before the Court pertain to disputes between States, while 20 per cent involve requests for advisory opinions. The existence of an international court, even if it does not have full and final authority, has therefore led to situations where, thanks to the Court's work, the resort to force or war has been averted. However, certain States' interference with the Statute of the Court, together with their non-recognition of its compulsory jurisdiction, has in many cases weakened the role of the Court and impeded the implementation of its judgments, despite the fact that the Court has refused to show favouritism or to give favourable treatment to some at the expense of others, which is not always the case in certain national judicial bodies.

In December 2003, the General Assembly requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legitimacy of the Israeli occupying authorities' construction of a separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories. On 9 July 2004, the Court issued an opinion on the illegitimacy of the wall, finding it to be a violation of international law. The Court demanded that construction of the wall be halted and that the Palestinians affected be compensated. The Court called upon the General Assembly and the Security Council to decide what additional steps were necessary to end the situation of illegality stemming from the construction of the wall.

The Court's request to the Security Council to take the necessary measures was made in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which states that

> "[e]ach Member of the United Nations undertakes to comply with the decision of the International Court of Justice in any case to which it is a party".

The same Article also states that

> "[i]f any party to a case fails to perform the obligations incumbent upon it under a judgment rendered by the Court, the other party may have recourse to the Security Council, which may, if it deems necessary, make recommendations or decide upon measures to be taken to give effect to the judgment".

Nevertheless, the Security Council has not to date taken any measures that might have honestly and objectively contributed to achieving justice and fairness in this case. The international community must respect the will of the Court and implement its judgments in accordance with its legal duties and obligations stipulated by international law. My country has been a litigant in the International Court of Justice on many occasions, and the State of Libya has abided by all judgments of the Court even when they did not necessarily serve our interests, because Libya respects international law and the rulings of the International Court of Justice, and because we commend the role of international law in serving justice.

In conclusion, we call for coming together to give the decisions and judgments of the International Court of Justice the support they need as well as to adopt practical mechanisms that ensure the implementation of those decisions and judgments.

Mr. Rietjens (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, for introducing the annual report of the Court (A/73/4). On behalf of the Kingdom of Belgium, I would like to commend the work of all the judges, in particular President Yusuf and Vice-President Xue Hanqin. As the Belgian representative, I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Registrar, our compatriot Mr. Philippe Couvreur, who, together with his efficient team, has carried out his duties in an exemplary and highly appreciated manner for many years. Finally, I would like to congratulate Judge Nawaf

Salam and Judge Yuji Iwasawa on their recent elections to the Court.

Belgium has always attached great importance to the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, which plays a crucial role in the peaceful settlement of disputes and thereby contributes to the prevention of conflicts and the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations.

In this regard, I would like to point out that 2018 marks the sixtieth anniversary of Belgium's acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction. On this occasion, we would like to encourage all States that have not yet done so to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court. At the same time, we call on all States concerned to continue to accept this jurisdiction in the context of specific bilateral or multilateral treaties to which they are a party and which have designated the Court as the main instrument for settling disputes arising from these treaties.

Upon reading the report presented by President Yusuf this morning, Belgium could not but note that the Court's workload is constantly increasing. Indeed, at the moment, there are no less than 17 cases pending. This intensive activity reflects the trust that States have in the Court and their interest in finding a legal and peaceful solution to their disputes. The geographic diversity of the States concerned in cases submitted to the Court and the variety of the areas in which it is called upon to render judgment attest to the fundamental role played by the Court and the universal nature of its jurisdiction. Through both its judgments and its advisory opinions, which have significantly increased over the years, the Court has contributed substantially to the application, interpretation and accuracy of international law. Given the considerable scope of its jurisprudence and its contribution to determining and developing international law, we encourage States and international organizations to continue to include in future multilateral treaties provisions recognizing the Court's jurisdiction over disputes related to the application or interpretation of these treaties.

The representation of different legal systems, languages and cultures in the Court undoubtedly contributes to the efficiency and the quality of its decisions. However, we are firmly convinced that the Court can be truly effective only if its judgments, opinions and orders are respected.

Mr. Alday González (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The world today faces enormous challenges that test the rule of law and erode multilateralism, such as climate change, armed conflicts, terrorism and human rights violations. In the face of this reality, the strength of global institutions and international law is crucial. It is from that perspective that Mexico is participating in today's debate.

The work of the International Court of Justice cannot be seen as just another item on the agenda of the General Assembly. It must be placed at the centre of our attention so that the peaceful settlement of disputes, through the work of the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, is duly valued.

The report introduced by President Yusuf (A/73/4) demonstrates the strength of the Court and underscores its relevance to the maintenance of international peace and security. To that end, it is very important to recall that, in the past decade alone, more than 20 new contentious cases have been brought before the Court from States in all regions of the world and that its advisory function has also been resorted to. Similarly, the great variety of issues that are being addressed, which range from territorial disputes, whether on land or at sea, to the immunities of State officials and the diversity of the legal sources invoked and analysed, demonstrate why the Court is indeed the highest judicial authority in the world.

However, my delegation is concerned that currently only 73 States Members of the United Nations, that is, less than half of the Organization's membership, have accepted the Court's compulsory jurisdiction and that some are even seeking mechanisms to avoid being subject to its jurisdiction. Faced with this scenario, Mexico reiterates that lack of accountability will always be a factor that weakens the rule of law. Moreover, it creates the risk that the emergence of new disputes could lead to conflicts with an international dimension.

We also recognize that while adjudication alone is not enough to restore the rule of law when it has been violated, it is a precondition for the implementation of measures to restore order and legality. In the end, the Court's effectiveness depends on compliance with its judgments. Cases of non-compliance, while still a small minority, considerably weaken its function.

That is a particularly sensitive issue for my country. For the first time in its history, in 2003, Mexico appealed to the International Court of Justice

in the so-called *Avena* case to resolve in good faith a dispute arising from the violation of article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations with regard to 51 cases of Mexican nationals sentenced to death in various United States courts. With a favourable judgment issued in 2004, now, almost 15 years later, the judgment has yet to be complied with. Furthermore, over the course of these years, six Mexicans, all of whom were subject to protection by the judgment of the Court, have been executed. We believe that each of these executions is an additional violation of international law. We respectfully call for that not to be the case for Mr. Roberto Ramos Moreno, who is also covered by the judgment in the case concerning *Avena and Other Mexican Nationals (Mexico v. United States of America)*, and whose execution is scheduled for 14 November.

I reiterate the message with which I began my statement — the current threats to the rule of law compel us to give the International Court of Justice the place that the Charter of the United Nations itself accords it on a topic as crucial as the resolution of disputes, especially when they could lead to conflicts that threaten or disrupt international peace and security.

Ultimately, it is essential to remember that the best option will always be to turn to a court of law to adjudicate a dispute, that the court's judgments will continue to set the tone for a global order based on law and justice and that non-compliance with the law can never legitimize States' failure to meet their international obligations.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Republic of Cuba welcomes the introduction of the report of the International Court of Justice for the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018 (A/73/4). We reiterate our commitment to the strict enforcement of international law.

My delegation recognizes the work of the Court since its inception. Its decisions and advisory opinions have been particularly significant, not only in the cases submitted for its consideration, but also for the development of public international law, since the Court is an important source thereof. The Republic of Cuba welcomes the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with Article 33, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations and has declared acceptance with prior consent of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

Cuba deplores the fact that some of the Court's judgments have not been enforced, in flagrant violation of Article 94 of the Charter of the United Nations, pursuant to which each State Member of the United Nations must commit to complying with the decisions of the International Court of Justice in all disputes to which it is a party. In this regard, my country notes with concern that the effectiveness and enforceability of the Court's judgment may be subject to criticism, not without reason, when some countries still do not recognize judgments unfavourable to them. Sadly, these countries' refusal to comply with the Court's decisions and their blocking of the mechanisms of the United Nations to enforce such decisions by availing themselves of their veto rights in the Security Council shows the flaws in the Court's enforcement tools. This situation makes clear the need to reform the United Nations system in order to provide additional guarantees to developing countries to level the playing field with powerful countries. The same is true for the International Court of Justice.

Cuba attaches particular importance to the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice, including its advisory opinion of 9 June 2004, entitled *Legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory* (see A/ES-10/273), which is fully applicable in the current circumstances. That is why, as has been stated in this Hall, Cuba urges that the Court's advisory opinion be fully implemented and calls on all States to respect and comply with the Court's provisions in that important matter.

The Republic of Cuba wishes to thank the Court for the publications it has made available to Governments parties and for its online resources, which are valuable materials for the dissemination and study of public international law, especially for developing countries, some of which are often deprived of information related to developments in international law. In the case of Cuba, that is due to an absurd and obsolete policy of blockade that is imposed by the United States and overwhelmingly rejected by the international community.

We once again reiterate that the Republic of Cuba has been a peaceful country that respects international law and has always faithfully honoured its international obligations under the treaties to which it is party. We

take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to peace.

Mr. Xu Hong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to congratulate President Yusuf and Vice-President Xue Hanqin on their election to preside over the International Court of Justice. We thank President Yusuf for his report on the work of the Court (A/73/4), and we thank all the Court's judges and staff for their hard work over the past year.

Established by the Charter of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It is also the most authoritative and influential international judicial institution in the world today. Since its inception more than 70 years ago, the Court has performed judicial functions in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Court's Statute, delivering more than 120 judgments and nearly 30 advisory opinions. These judicial activities have played an important role in the interpretation, application and development of the rules of international law, the peaceful settlement of international disputes, and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The workload of the Court has been increasing in recent years. In the past year in particular, the number of contentious cases and requests for advisory opinions from the Court has gone up, which attests to the Court's growing role in the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the international community's greater trust in and expectations of the Court. The contentious cases and the requests for opinion currently before the Court pertain to important issues in international law, such as territorial sovereignty, decolonization, immunities, human rights protection, and unilateral sanctions, inter alia, many of which involve the principle of State consent, invoked by international judicial authorities when settling disputes between States. The way the Court handles these cases will have a direct bearing on the interests of the States concerned or the important functions of the United Nations agencies and may have far-reaching implications for the development of the relevant rules of international law. Therefore, the Court must act in strict accordance with the law and preserve its authority and reputation through its actions.

The Court should be equipped with sufficient resources in order to ensure that it can perform its judicial functions effectively. In particular, given its increasingly heavy workload, it is all the more necessary for the Court to have resources commensurate with its actual needs. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China will continue to support the Court in obtaining the necessary assurances and support within the framework of the United Nations.

China is a staunch defender of the peaceful settlement of international disputes as an important principle of international law. It has always been committed to resolving international disputes through negotiation and consultation, and resolutely rejects frequent recourse to international actions that aggravate differences and extend disputes. At present, international relations are being severely challenged by unilateralism. China will work steadfastly alongside the international community to safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and defend international law based on the United Nations Charter. As a matter of course, this includes supporting the Court in the carrying out of its judicial functions, in accordance with law. We sincerely hope that the International Court of Justice will make greater contributions to upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and promoting the rule of law at the international level.

Mr. Hitti (Lebanon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank the President of the International Court of Justice, Mr. Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, for introducing the report on the activities of the Court (A/73/4). I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his assumption of the presidency of the Court this year, as well as Ms. Xue Hanqin on her assumption of the vice-presidency.

The International Court of Justice remains an essential component of an international order based on multilateralism and a vital link in the promotion of friendly relations among States. It should be recalled here that, under Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, judicial settlement is one of the peaceful means available to States to resolve their disputes. The Court also plays a major role in safeguarding and developing international law, through both its contentious proceedings and its advisory opinions. The Court gives life to legal rules by proving that they cannot be reduced to abstract concepts.

One of the reasons for the safeguarding and development of international law is the Court's bilingualism. English and French, the Court's two

official languages, reflect a legal tradition, culture and system. Their balanced use therefore has an impact on the Court's jurisprudence. Professor Alain Pellet also said that bilingualism is "a guarantee of better justice that is more authentically international and therefore probably more acceptable to all specific litigants such as sovereign States".

The geographical diversity of the States using the Court illustrates its pre-eminence and further reinforces its universal character. In addition, the diverse range of areas covered by the Court's work, from territorial and maritime disputes to human rights, to the interpretation and application of international conventions and treaties, contributes to enriching the International Court of Justice's jurisprudence and clarifying aspects of international law. A recent example is the Court's unprecedented recognition, in its ruling on the case concerning *Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*, of 2 February 2018, of the right to compensation for environmental damage.

Moreover, my delegation is pleased to note that the Court's ever-increasing workload has not prevented it from issuing rulings within a reasonable time frame. Indeed, it is mentioned in the report that the period between the closure of the oral proceedings and the reading of a judgment or an advisory opinion by the Court does not exceed six months on average. My delegation expresses its gratitude to the judges, as well as to the Registrar and all members of the Court, for the efficiency of their work.

As one of the founding countries of the United Nations, Lebanon remains firmly committed to international justice and the promotion of the rule of law; its support for the principal judicial organ of the United Nations is a clear and uncompromising manifestation of that commitment.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.